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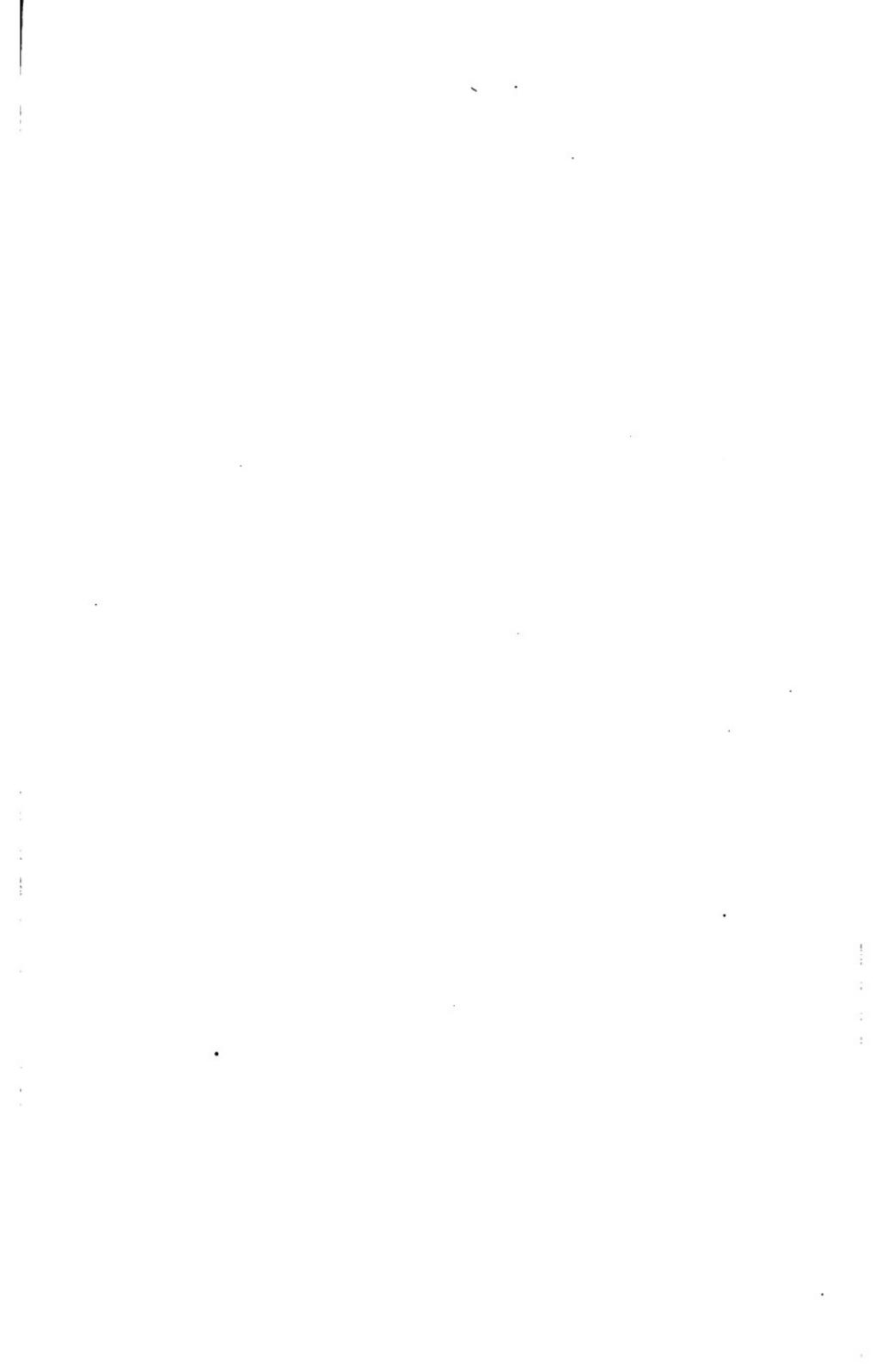
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THE COMEDY OF HUMAN LIFE

BY H. DE BALZAC

SCENES FROM PARISIAN LIFE

FERRAGUS, CHIEF OF THE DÉVORANTS
THE LAST INCARNATION OF VAUTRIN

BALZAC'S NOVELS.

Translated by Miss K. P. WORMELEY.

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LUCIEN DE RUBEMPRÉ.
FERRAGUS, CHIEF OF THE DÉVORANTS

ROBERTS BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS,
BOSTON.

HONORÉ DE BALZAC
TRANSLATED BY

KATHARINE PRESCOTT WORMELEY

FERRAGUS,
CHIEF OF THE DÉVORANTS

THE LAST INCARNATION OF
VAUTRIN



ROBERTS BROTHERS
3 SOMERSET STREET
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1895

THE WISE
AND BRAVE

GIFT OF

John H. Mee

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P R E F A C E.

THIRTEEN men were banded together in Paris under the Empire, all imbued with one and the same sentiment, all gifted with sufficient energy to be faithful to the same thought, with sufficient honor among themselves never to betray one another even if their interests clashed; and sufficiently wily and politic to conceal the sacred ties that united them, sufficiently strong to maintain themselves above the law, bold enough to undertake all things, and fortunate enough to succeed, nearly always, in their undertakings; having run the greatest dangers, but keeping silence if defeated; inaccessible to fear; trembling neither before princes, nor executioners, not even before innocence; accepting each other for such as they were, without social prejudices,—criminals no doubt, but certainly remarkable through certain of the qualities that make great men, and recruiting their number only among men of mark. That nothing might be lacking to the sombre and mysterious poesy of their history, these Thirteen men have remained to this day unknown;

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though all have realized the most chimerical ideas that the fantastic power falsely attributed to the Manfreds, the Fausts, and the Melmoths can suggest to the imagination. To-day, they are broken up, or, at least, dispersed; they have peaceably put their necks once more under the yoke of civil law, just as Morgan, that Achilles among pirates, transformed himself from a buccaneering scourge to a quiet colonist, and spent, without remorse, around his domestic hearth the millions gathered in blood by the lurid light of flames and slaughter.

Since the death of Napoleon, circumstances, about which the author must keep silence, have still farther dissolved the original bond of this secret society, always extraordinary, sometimes sinister, as though it lived in the blackest pages of Mrs. Radcliffe. A somewhat strange permission to relate in his own way a few of the adventures of these men (while respecting certain susceptibilities) has only recently been given to him by one of those anonymous heroes to whom all society was once occultly subjected. In this permission the writer fancied he detected a vague desire for personal celebrity.

This man, apparently still young, with fair hair and blue eyes, whose sweet, clear voice seemed to denote a feminine soul, was pale of face and mysterious in manner; he conversed affably, declared himself not more

than forty years of age, and apparently belonged to the very highest social classes. The name which he assumed must have been fictitious; his person was unknown in society. Who was he? That, no one has ever known.

Perhaps in confiding to the author the extraordinary matters which he related to him, this mysterious person may have wished to see them in a manner reproduced, and thus enjoy the emotions they were certain to bring to the heart of the masses,—a feeling analogous to that of Macpherson when the name of his creation Ossian was transcribed into all languages. That was certainly, for the Scotch lawyer, one of the keenest, or at any rate the rarest, sensations a man could give himself. Is it not the incognito of genius? To write the “Itinerary from Paris to Jerusalem” is to take a share in the human glory of a single epoch; but to endow his native land with another Homer, was not that usurping the work of God?

The author knows too well the laws of narration to be ignorant of the pledges this short preface is contracting for him; but he also knows enough of the history of the THIRTEEN to be certain that his present tale will never be thought below the interest inspired by this programme. Dramas steeped in blood, comedies filled with terror, romantic tales through which rolled heads mysteriously decapitated, have been con-

fided to him. If readers were not surfeited with horrors served up to them of late in cold blood, he might reveal the calm atrocities, the surpassing tragedies concealed under family life. But he chooses in preference gentler events,—those where scenes of purity succeed the tempests of passion; where woman is radiant with virtue and beauty. To the honor of the THIRTEEN be it said that there are such scenes in their history, which may have the honor of being some day published as a foil to tales of filibusters,—that race apart from others, so curiously energetic, and so interesting in spite of its crimes.

An author ought to be above converting his tale, when the tale is true, into a species of surprise-game, and of taking his readers, as certain novelists do, through many volumes and from cellar to cellar, to show them the dry bones of a dead body, and tell them, by way of conclusion, that *that* is what has frightened them behind doors, hidden in the arras, or in cellars where the dead man was buried and forgotten. In spite of his aversion for prefaces, the author feels bound to place the following statement at the head of this narrative. Ferragus is a first episode which clings by invisible links to the “History of the THIRTEEN,” whose power, naturally acquired, can alone explain certain acts and agencies which would otherwise seem supernatural. Although it is permissible in tellers of tales to have

a sort of literary coquetry in becoming historians, they ought to renounce the benefit that may accrue from an odd or fantastic title — on which certain slight successes have been won in the present day. Consequently, the author will now explain, succinctly, the reasons that oblige him to select a title to his book which seems at first sight unnatural.

FERRAGUS is, according to ancient custom, a name taken by the chief or Grand Master of the Dévorants. On the day of their election these chiefs continue whichever of the dynasties of their Order they are most in sympathy with, precisely as the Popes do, on their accession, in connection with pontifical dynasties. Thus the Dévorants have “Trempe-la-Soupe IX.,” “Ferragus XXII.,” “Tutanus XIII.,” “Masche-Fer IV.,” just as the Church has Clement XIV., Gregory VII., Julius II., Alexander VI., etc.

Now, then, who are the Dévorants? “Dévorant” is the name of one of those tribes of “Companions” that issued in ancient times from the great mystical association formed among the workers for Christianity to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem. Companionism (to coin a word) still exists in France among the people. Its traditions, powerful over minds that are not enlightened, and over men not educated enough to cast aside an oath, might serve the ends of formidable enterprises if some rough-hewn genius were to seize

hold of these diverse associations. All the instruments of this Companionism are well-nigh blind. From town to town there has existed from time immemorial, for the use of Companions, an “Obade,”—a sort of halting-place, kept by a “Mother,” an old woman, half-gypsy, with nothing to lose, knowing everything that happens in her neighborhood, and devoted, either from fear or habit, to the tribe, whose straggling members she feeds and lodges. This people, ever moving and changing, though controlled by immutable customs, has its eyes everywhere, executes, without judging it, a WILL,—for the oldest Companion still belongs to an era when men had faith. Moreover, the whole body profess doctrines that are sufficiently true and sufficiently mysterious to electrify into a sort of tribal loyalty all adepts whenever they obtain even a slight development. The attachment of the Companions to their laws is so passionate that the diverse tribes will fight sanguinary battles with each other in defence of some question of principle.

Happily for our present public safety, when a Dévorant is ambitious, he builds houses, lays by his money, and leaves the Order. There is many a curious thing to tell about the “Compagnons du Devoir” [Companions of the Duty], the rivals of the Dévorants, and about the different sects of working-men, their usages, their fraternity, and the bond existing between them

and the free-masons. But such details would be out of place here. The author must, however, add that under the old monarchy it was not an unknown thing to find a “Trempe-la-Soupe” enslaved to the king sentenced for a hundred and one years to the galleys, but ruling his tribe from there, religiously consulted by it, and, when he escaped from his galley, certain of help, succor, and respect, wherever he might be. To see its grandmaster at the galleys is, to the faithful tribe, only one of those misfortunes for which Providence is responsible, and which does not release the Dévorants from obeying a power created by them to be above them. It is but the passing exile of their legitimate king, always a king for them. Thus we see the romantic prestige attaching to the name of Ferragus and to that of the Dévorants completely dissipated.

As for the THIRTEEN, they were all men of the stamp of Trelawney, Lord Byron’s friend, who was, they say, the original of his “Corsair.” They were all fatalists, men of nerve and poesy, weary of leading flat and empty lives, driven toward Asiatic enjoyments by forces all the more excessive because, long dormant, they awoke furious. One of them, after re-reading “Venice Preserved,” and admiring the sublime union of Pierre and Jaffier, began to reflect on the virtues shown by men who are outlawed by society, on the honesty of galley-slaves, the faithfulness of thieves

among each other, the privileges of exorbitant power which such men know how to win by concentrating all ideas into a single will. He saw that Man is greater than men. He concluded that society ought to belong wholly to those distinguished beings who, to natural intelligence, acquired wisdom, and fortune, add a fanaticism hot enough to fuse into one casting these different forces. That done, their occult power, vast in action and in intensity, against which the social order would be helpless, would cast down all obstacles, blast all other wills, and give to each the devilish power of all. This world apart within the world, hostile to the world, admitting none of the world's ideas, not recognizing any law, not submitting to any conscience but that of necessity, obedient to a devotion only, acting with every faculty for a single associate when one of their number asked for the assistance of all,—this life of filibusters in lemon kid gloves and cabriolets; this intimate union of superior beings, cold and sarcastic, smiling and cursing in the midst of a false and puerile society; this certainty of forcing all things to serve an end, of plotting a vengeance that could not fail of living in thirteen hearts; this happiness of nurturing a secret hatred in the face of men, and of being always in arms against them; this ability to withdraw to the sanctuary of self with one idea more than even the most remarkable of men could have,—this religion

of pleasure and egotism cast so strong a spell over Thirteen men that they revived the society of Jesuits to the profit of the devil.

It was horrible and stupendous; but the compact was made, and it lasted precisely because it appeared to be so impossible.

There was, therefore, in Paris a brotherhood of THIRTEEN, who belonged to each other absolutely, but ignored themselves as absolutely before the world. At night they met, like conspirators, hiding no thought, disposing each and all of a common fortune, like that of the Old Man of the Mountain; having their feet in all salons, their hands in all money-boxes, their elbows in the streets, their heads on many pillows, and making all things serve their purpose or their fancy without scruple. No chief commanded them; no one member could arrogate to himself that power. The most eager passion, the most exacting circumstance, alone had the right to pass first. They were Thirteen unknown kings, — but true kings, more than ordinary kings and judges and executioners, — men who, having made themselves wings to roam through society from depth to height, disdained to be anything in the social sphere because they could be all. If the present writer ever learns the reasons of their abdication of this power, he will take occasion to tell them.¹

¹ See Théophile Gautier's account of the society of the "Cheval Rouge." Memoir of Balzac. Roberts Brothers, Boston.

Now, with this brief explanation, he may be allowed to begin the tale of certain episodes in the history of the THIRTEEN, which have more particularly attracted him by the Parisian flavor of their details and the whimsicality of their contrasts.

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FERRAGUS,
CHIEF OF THE DÉVORANTS.

TO HECTOR BERLIOZ.

I.

MADAME JULES.

CERTAIN streets in Paris are as degraded as a man covered with infamy ; also, there are noble streets, streets simply respectable, young streets on the morality of which the public has not yet formed an opinion ; also cut-throat streets, streets older than the age of the oldest dowagers, estimable streets, streets always clean, streets always dirty, working, laboring, and mercantile streets. In short, the streets of Paris have every human quality, and impress us, by what we must call their physiognomy, with certain ideas against which we are defenceless. There are, for instance, streets of a bad neighborhood in which you could not be induced to live, and streets where you would willingly take up your abode. Some streets, like the rue Montmartre,

Ferragus.

have a charming head, and end in a fish's tail. The rue de la Paix is a wide street, a fine street, yet it wakens none of those gracefully noble thoughts which come to an impressible mind in the middle of the rue Royale, and it certainly lacks the majesty which reigns in the Place Vendôme.

If you walk the streets of the Île Saint-Louis, do not seek the reason of the nervous sadness that lays hold upon you save in the solitude of the spot, the gloomy look of the houses, and the great deserted mansions. This island, the ghost of *fermiers-généraux*, is the Venice of Paris. The Place de la Bourse is voluble, busy, degraded ; it is never fine except by moonlight at two in the morning. By day it is Paris epitomized ; by night it is a dream of Greece. The rue Traversière-Saint-Honoré—is not that a villainous street ? Look at the wretched little houses with two windows on a floor, where vice, and crime, and misery abound. The narrow streets exposed to the north, where the sun never comes more than three or four times a year, are the cut-throat streets which murder with impunity ; the authorities of the present day do not meddle with them ; but in former times the Parliament might perhaps have summoned the lieutenant of police and reprimanded him for the state of things ; and it would, at least, have issued some decree against such streets, as it once did against the wigs of the Chapter of Beau-

vais. And yet Monsieur Benoiston de Châteauneuf has proved that the mortality of these streets is double that of others! To sum up such theories by a single example: is not the rue Fromentin both murderous and profligate!

These observations, incomprehensible out of Paris, will doubtless be understood by musing men of thought and poesy and pleasure, who know, while rambling about Paris, how to harvest the mass of floating interests which may be gathered at all hours within her walls; to them Paris is the most delightful and varied of monsters: here, a pretty woman; farther on, a haggard pauper; here, new as the coinage of a new reign; there, in this corner, elegant as a fashionable woman. A monster, moreover, complete! Its garrets, as it were, a head full of knowledge and genius; its first stories stomachs repleted; its shops, actual feet, where the busy ambulating crowds are moving. Ah! what an ever-active life the monster leads! Hardly has the last vibration of the last carriage coming from a ball ceased at its heart before its arms are moving at the barriers and it shakes itself slowly into motion. Doors open; turning on their hinges like the membrane of some huge lobster, invisibly manipulated by thirty thousand men or women, of whom each individual occupies a space of six square feet, but has a kitchen, a workshop, a bed, children, a garden, little light to

see by, but must see all. Imperceptibly, the articulations begin to crack ; motion communicates itself ; the street speaks. By mid-day, all is alive ; the chimneys smoke, the monster eats ; then he roars, and his thousand paws begin to ramp. Splendid spectacle ! But, O Paris ! he who has not admired your gloomy passages, your gleams and flashes of light, your deep and silent *cul-de-sacs*, who has not listened to your murmurings between midnight and two in the morning, knows nothing as yet of your true poesy, nor of your broad and fantastic contrasts.

There are a few amateurs who never go their way heedlessly ; who savor their Paris, so to speak ; who know its physiognomy so well that they see every wart, and pimple, and redness. To others, Paris is always that monstrous marvel, that amazing assemblage of activities, of schemes, of thoughts ; the city of a hundred thousand tales, the head of the universe. But to those few, Paris is sad or gay, ugly or beautiful, living or dead ; to them Paris is a creature ; every man, every fraction of a house is a lobe of the cellular tissue of that great courtesan whose head and heart and fantastic customs they know so well. These men are lovers of Paris ; they lift their noses at such or such a corner of a street, certain that they can see the face of a clock ; they tell a friend whose tobacco-pouch is empty, " Go down that passage and turn to the left ; there's a

tobacconist next door to a confectioner, where there's a pretty girl." Rambling about Paris is, to these poets, a costly luxury. How can they help spending precious minutes before the dramas, disasters, faces, and picturesque events which meet us everywhere amid this heaving queen of cities, clothed in posters,— who has, nevertheless, not a single clean corner, so complying is she to the vices of the French nation! Who has not chanced to leave his home early in the morning, intending to go to some extremity of Paris, and found himself unable to get away from the centre of it by the dinner-hour? Such a man will know how to excuse this vagabondizing start upon our tale; which, however, we here sum up in an observation both useful and novel, as far as any observation can be novel in Paris, where there is nothing new,— not even the statue erected yesterday, on which some young gamin has already scribbled his name.

Well, then! there are streets, or ends of streets, there are houses, unknown for the most part to persons of social distinction, to which a woman of that class cannot go without causing cruel and very wounding things to be thought of her. Whether the woman be rich and has a carriage, whether she is on foot, or is disguised, if she enters one of these Parisian defiles at any hour of the day, she compromises her reputation as a virtuous woman. If, by chance, she is there at

nine in the evening the conjectures that an observer permits himself to make upon her may prove fearful in their consequences. But if the woman is young and pretty, if she enters a house in one of those streets, if the house has a long, dark, damp, and evil-smelling passage-way, at the end of which flickers the pallid gleam of an oil lamp, and if beneath that gleam appears the horrid face of a withered old woman with fleshless fingers, ah, then! and we say it in the interests of young and pretty women, that woman is lost. She is at the mercy of the first man of her acquaintance who sees her in that Parisian slough. There is more than one street in Paris where such a meeting may lead to a frightful drama, a bloody drama of death and love, a drama of the modern school.

Unhappily, this scene, like modern drama itself, will be comprehended by only a small number of persons; and it is a pity to tell the tale to a public which cannot enter into its local merit. But who can flatter himself that he will ever be understood? We all die unknown — 't is the saying of women and of authors.

At half-past eight o'clock one evening, in the rue Pagevin, in the days when that street had no wall which did not echo some infamous word, and was, in the direction of the rue Soly, the narrowest and most impassable street in Paris (not excepting the least frequented corner of the most deserted street), — at the

beginning of the month of February about thirteen years ago, a young man, by one of those chances which come but once in life, turned the corner of the rue Pagevin to enter the rue des Vieux-Augustins, close to the rue Soly. There, this young man, who lived himself in the rue de Bourbon, saw in a woman near whom he had been unconsciously walking, a vague resemblance to the prettiest woman in Paris; a chaste and delightful person, with whom he was secretly and passionately in love,—a love without hope; she was married. In a moment his heart leaped, an intolerable heat surged from his centre and flowed through all his veins; his back turned cold, the skin of his head crept. He loved, he was young, he knew Paris; and his knowledge did not permit him to be ignorant of all there was of possible infamy in an elegant, rich, young, and beautiful woman walking there, alone, with a furtively criminal step. *She in that mud! at that hour!*

The love that this young man felt for that woman may seem romantic, and all the more so because he was an officer in the Royal Guard. If he had been in the infantry, the affair might have seemed more likely; but, as an officer of rank in the cavalry, he belonged to that French arm which demands rapidity in its conquests and derives as much vanity from its amorous exploits as from its dashing uniform. But the passion of this officer was a true love, and many

young hearts will think it noble. He loved this woman because she was virtuous ; he loved her virtue, her modest grace, her imposing saintliness, as the dearest treasures of his hidden passion. This woman was indeed worthy to inspire one of those platonic loves which are found, like flowers amid bloody ruins, in the history of the middle-ages ; worthy to be the hidden principle of all the actions of a young man's life ; a love as high, as pure as the skies when blue ; a love without hope and to which men bind themselves because it can never deceive ; a love that is prodigal of unchecked enjoyment, especially at an age when the heart is ardent, the imagination keen, and the eyes of a man see very clearly.

Strange, weird, inconceivable effects may be met with at night in Paris. Only those who have amused themselves by watching those effects have any idea how fantastic a woman may appear there at dusk. At times the creature whom you are following, by accident or design, seems to you light and slender ; the stockings, if they are white, make you fancy that the legs must be slim and elegant ; the figure though wrapped in a shawl, or concealed by a pelisse, defines itself gracefully and seductively among the shadows ; anon, the uncertain gleam thrown from a shop-window or a street lamp bestows a fleeting lustre, nearly always deceptive, on the unknown woman, and fires the imag-

ination, carrying it far beyond the truth. The senses then bestir themselves; everything takes color and animation; the woman appears in an altogether novel aspect; her person becomes beautiful. Behold! she is not a woman, she is a demon, a siren, who is drawing you by magnetic attraction to some respectable house, where the worthy *bourgeoise*, frightened by your threatening step and the clack of your boots, shuts the door in your face without looking at you.

A vacillating gleam, thrown from the shop-window of a shoemaker, suddenly illuminated from the waist down the figure of the woman who was before the young man. Ah! surely, *she* alone had that swaying figure; she alone knew the secret of that chaste gait which innocently set into relief the many beauties of that attractive form. Yes, that was the shawl, and that the velvet bonnet which she wore in the mornings. On her gray silk stockings not a spot, on her shoes not a splash. The shawl held tightly round the bust disclosed, vaguely, its charming lines; and the young man, who had often seen those shoulders at a ball, knew well the treasures that the shawl concealed. By the way a Parisian woman wraps a shawl around her, and the way she lifts her feet in the street, a man of intelligence in such studies can divine the secret of her mysterious errand. There is something, I know not what, of quivering buoyancy in the person, in the

gait; the woman seems to weigh less; she steps, or rather, she glides like a star, and floats onward led by a thought which exhales from the folds and motion of her dress. The young man hastened his step, passed the woman, and then turned back to look at her. Pst! she had disappeared into a passage-way, the grated door of which and its bell still rattled and sounded. The young man walked back to the alley and saw the woman reach the farther end, where she began to mount — not without receiving the obsequious bow of an old portress — a winding staircase, the lower steps of which were strongly lighted; she went up buoyantly, eagerly, as though impatient.

“Impatient for what?” said the young man to himself, drawing back to lean against a wooden railing on the other side of the street. He gazed, unhappy man, at the different storeys of the house, with the keen attention of a detective searching for a conspirator.

It was one of those houses of which there are thousands in Paris, ignoble, vulgar, narrow, yellowish in tone, with four storeys and three windows on each floor. The outer blinds of the first floor were closed. Where was she going? The young man fancied he heard the tinkle of a bell on the second floor. As if in answer to it, a light began to move in a room with two windows strongly illuminated, which presently lit up the third window, evidently that of a first room,

either the salon or the dining-room of the apartment. Instantly the outline of a woman's bonnet showed vaguely on the window, and a door between the two rooms must have closed, for the first was dark again, while the two other windows resumed their ruddy glow. At this moment a voice said, "Hi, there!" and the young man was conscious of a blow on his shoulder.

"Why don't you pay attention?" said the rough voice of a workman, carrying a plank on his shoulder. The man passed on. He was the voice of Providence saying to the watcher: "What are you meddling with? Think of your own duty; and leave these Parisians to their own affairs."

The young man crossed his arms; then, as no one beheld him, he suffered tears of rage to flow down his cheeks unchecked. At last the sight of the shadows moving behind the lighted windows gave him such pain that he looked elsewhere and noticed a hackney-coach, standing against a wall in the upper part of the rue des Vieux-Augustins, at a place where there was neither the door of a house, nor the light of a shop-window.

Was it she? Was it not she? Life or death to a lover! This lover waited. He stood there during a century of twenty minutes. After that the woman came down, and he then recognized her as the one

whom he secretly loved. Nevertheless, he wanted still to doubt. She went to the hackney-coach and got into it.

“The house will always be there and I can search it later,” thought the young man, following the carriage at a run, to solve his last doubts; and soon he did so.

The coach stopped in the rue de Richelieu before a shop for artificial flowers, close to the rue de Ménars. The lady got out, entered the shop, sent out the money to pay the coachman, and presently left the shop herself, on foot, after buying a bunch of marabouts. Marabouts for her black hair! The officer beheld her, through the window-panes, placing the feathers to her head to see the effect, and he fancied he could hear the conversation between herself and the shop-woman.

“Oh! madame, nothing is more suitable for brunettes: brunettes have something a little too strongly marked in their lines, and marabouts give them just that *flow* which they lack. Madame la Duchesse de Langeais says they give a woman something vague, Ossianic, and very high-bred.”

“Very good; send them to me at once.”

Then the lady turned quickly toward the rue de Ménars, and entered her own house. When the door closed on her, the young lover, having lost his hopes, and worse, far worse, his dearest beliefs, walked

through the streets like a drunken man, and presently found himself in his own room without knowing how he came there. He flung himself into an arm-chair, put his head in his hands and his feet on the andirons, drying his boots until he burned them. It was an awful moment,—one of those moments in human life when the character is moulded, and the future conduct of the best of men depends on the good or evil fortune of his first action. Providence or fatality?—choose which you will.

This young man belonged to a good family, whose nobility was not very ancient; but there are so few really old families in these days, that all men of rank are ancient without dispute. His grandfather had bought the office of counsellor to the Parliament of Paris, where he afterwards became president. His sons, each provided with a handsome fortune, entered the army, and through their marriages became attached to the court. The Revolution swept the family away; but one old dowager, too obstinate to emigrate, was left; she was put in prison, threatened with death, but was saved by the 9th Thermidor and recovered her property. When the proper time came, about the year 1804, she recalled her grandson to France. **Auguste de Maulincour**, the only scion of the Carbonnon de Maulincour, was brought up by the good dowager with the triple care of a mother, a woman of rank,

and an obstinate dowager. When the Restoration came, the young man, then eighteen years of age, entered the Maison-Rouge, followed the princes to Ghent, was made an officer in the body-guard, left it to serve in the line, but was recalled later to the Royal Guard, where, at twenty-three years of age, he found himself major of a cavalry regiment,—a splendid position, due to his grandmother, who had played her cards well to obtain it, in spite of his youth. This double biography is a compendium of the general and special history, barring variations, of all the noble families who emigrated having debts and property, dowagers and tact.

Madame la Baronne de Maulincour had a friend in the old Vidame de Pamiers, formerly a commander of the Knights of Malta. This was one of those undying friendships founded on sexagenary ties which nothing can weaken, because at the bottom of such intimacies there are certain secrets of the human heart, delightful to guess at when we have the time, insipid to explain in twenty words, and which might make the text of a work in four volumes as amusing as the *Doyen de Killarine*,—a work about which young men talk and judge without having read it.

Auguste de Maulincour belonged therefore to the faubourg Saint-Germain through his grandmother and the vidame, and it sufficed him to date back two cen-

turies to take the tone and opinions of those who assume to go back to Clovis. This young man, pale, slender, and delicate in appearance, a man of honor and true courage, who would fight a duel for a yes or a no, had never yet fought upon a battle-field, though he wore in his button-hole the cross of the Legion of honor. He was, as you perceive, one of the blunders of the Restoration, perhaps the most excusable of them. The youth of those days was the youth of no epoch. It came between the memories of the Empire and those of the Emigration, between the old traditions of the court and the conscientious education of the *bourgeoisie*; between religion and fancy-balls; between two political faiths, between Louis XVIII., who saw only the present, and Charles X. who looked too far into the future; it was moreover bound to accept the will of the king, though the king was deceiving and tricking it. This unfortunate youth, unstable in all things, blind and yet clear-sighted, was counted as nothing by old men jealously keeping the reins of the State in their feeble hands, while the monarchy could have been saved by their retirement and the accession of this Young France, which the old doctrinaires, the *émigrés* of the Restoration, still speak of slightly. Anguste de Maulincour was a victim to the ideas which weighed in those days upon French youth, and we must here explain why.

The Vidame de Pamiers was still, at sixty-seven years of age, a very brilliant man, having seen much and lived much; a good talker, a man of honor and a gallant man, but who held as to women the most detestable opinions; he loved them, and he despised them. *Their* honor! *their* feelings! Ta-ra-ra, rubbish and shams! When he was with them, he believed in them, the ci-devant “monstre;” he never contradicted them, and he made them shine. But among his male friends, when the topic of the sex came up, he laid down the principle that to deceive women, and to carry on several intrigues at once, should be the occupation of those young men who were so misguided as to wish to meddle in the affairs of the State. It is sad to have to sketch so hackneyed a portrait, for has it not figured everywhere and become, literally, as threadbare as that of a grenadier of the Empire? But the vidame had an influence on Monsieur de Maulincour’s destiny which obliges us to preserve his portrait; he lectured the young man after his fashion, and did his best to convert him to the doctrines of the great age of gallantry.

The dowager, a tender-hearted, pious woman, sitting between God and her vidame, a model of grace and sweetness, but gifted with that well-bred persistency which triumphs in the long run, had longed to preserve for her grandson the beautiful illusions of life, and had therefore brought him up in the highest principles; she

instilled into him her own delicacy of feeling and made him, to outward appearance, a timid man, if not a fool. The sensibilities of the young fellow, preserved pure, were not worn by contact without; he remained so chaste, so scrupulous, that he was keenly offended by actions and maxims to which the world attached no consequence. Ashamed of this susceptibility, he forced himself to conceal it under a false hardihood; but he suffered in secret, all the while scoffing with others at the things he reverenced.

It came to pass that he was deceived; because, in accordance with a not uncommon whim of destiny, he, a man of gentle melancholy, and spiritual in love, encountered in the object of his first passion a woman who held in horror all German sentimentalism. The young man, in consequence, distrusted himself, became dreamy, absorbed in his griefs, complaining of not being understood. Then, as we desire all the more violently the things we find it difficult to obtain, he continued to adore women with that ingenuous tenderness and feline delicacy the secret of which belongs to women themselves, who may, perhaps, prefer to keep the monopoly of it. In point of fact, though women of the world complain of the way men love them, they have little liking themselves for those whose soul is half feminine. Their own superiority consists in making men believe they are their inferiors in love; there-

fore they will readily leave a lover if he is inexperienced enough to rob them of those fears with which they seek to deck themselves, those delightful tortures of feigned jealousy, those troubles of hope betrayed, those futile expectations,—in short, the whole procession of their feminine miseries. They hold Sir Charles Grandison in horror. What can be more contrary to their nature than a tranquil, perfect love? They want emotions; happiness without storms is not happiness to them. Women souls that are strong enough to bring infinite into love are angelic exceptions ; they are among women what noble geniuses are among men. Their great passions are rare as masterpieces. Below the level of such love come compromises, conventions, passing and contemptible irritations, as in all things petty and perishable.

Amid the hidden disasters of his heart, and while he was still seeking the woman who could comprehend him (a search which, let us remark in passing, is one of the amorous follies of our epoch), Auguste met, in the rank of society that was farthest from his own, in the secondary sphere of money, where banking holds the first place, a perfect being, one of those women who have I know not what about them that is saintly and sacred,—women who inspire such reverence that love has need of the help of long familiarity to declare itself.

Auguste then gave himself up wholly to the delights of the deepest and most moving of passions, to a love that was purely adoring. Innumerable repressed desires there were, shadows of passion so vague yet so profound, so fugitive and yet so actual, that one scarcely knows to what we may compare them. They are like perfumes, or clouds, or rays of the sun, or shadows, or whatever there is in nature that shines for a moment and disappears, that springs to life and dies, leaving in the heart long echoes of emotion. When the soul is young enough to nurture melancholy and far-off hope, to find in woman more than a woman, is it not the greatest happiness that can befall a man when he loves enough to feel more joy in touching a gloved hand, or a lock of hair, in listening to a word, in casting a single look, than in all the ardor of possession given by happy love? Thus it is that rejected persons, those rebuffed by fate, the ugly and unfortunate, lovers unrevealed, women and timid men, alone know the treasures contained in the voice of the beloved. Taking their source and their element from the soul itself, the vibrations of the air, charged with passion, put our hearts so powerfully into communion, carrying thought between them so lucidly, and being, above all, so incapable of falsehood, that a single inflection of a voice is often a revelation. What enchantments the intonations of a tender voice can bestow upon the heart

of a poet ! What ideas they awaken ! What freshness they shed there ! Love is in the voice before the glance avows it. *Auguste*, poet after the manner of lovers (there are poets who feel, and poets who express ; the first are the happiest), *Auguste* had tasted all these early joys, so vast, so fecund. SHE possessed the most winning organ that the most artful woman of the world could have desired in order to deceive at her ease ; *she* had that silvery voice which is soft to the ear, and ringing only for the heart which it stirs and troubles, caresses and subjugates.

And this woman went by night to the rue Soly through the rue Pagevin ! and her furtive apparition in an infamous house had just destroyed the grandest of passions ! The vidame's logic triumphed.

"If she is betraying her husband we will avenge ourselves," said *Auguste*.

There was still faith in that "if." The philosophic doubt of Descartes is a politeness with which we should always honor virtue. Ten o'clock sounded. The Baron de Maulincour remembered that this woman was going to a ball that evening at a house to which he had access. He dressed, went there, and searched for her through all the salons. The mistress of the house, Madame de Nucingen, seeing him thus occupied, said :—

" You are looking for Madame Jules ; but she has not yet come."

"Good evening, dear," said a voice.

Auguste and Madame de Nucingen turned round. Madame Jules had arrived, dressed in white, looking simple and noble, wearing in her hair the marabouts the young baron had seen her choose in the flower-shop. That voice of love now pierced his heart. Had he won the slightest right to be jealous of her he would have petrified her then and there by saying the words, "Rue Soly!" But if he, an alien to her life, had said those words in her ear a thousand times, Madame Jules would have asked him in astonishment what he meant. He looked at her stupidly.

For those sarcastic persons who scoff at all things it may be a great amusement to detect the secret of a woman, to know that her chastity is a lie, that her calm face hides some anxious thought, that under that pure brow is a dreadful drama. But there are other souls to whom the sight is saddening; and many of those who laugh in public, when withdrawn into themselves and alone with their conscience, curse the world while they despise the woman. Such was the case with Auguste de Maulincour, as he stood there in presence of Madame Jules. Singular situation! There was no other relation between them than that which social life establishes between persons who exchange a few words seven or eight times in the course of a winter, and yet he was calling her to account on behalf

of a happiness unknown to her; he was judging her, without letting her know of his accusation.

Many young men find themselves thus in despair at having broken forever with a woman adored in secret, condemned and despised in secret. There are many hidden monologues told to the walls of some solitary lodging; storms roused and calmed without ever leaving the depths of hearts; amazing scenes of the moral world, for which a painter is wanted. Madame Jules sat down, leaving her husband to make a turn around the salon. After she was seated she seemed uneasy, and, while talking with her neighbor, she kept a furtive eye on Monsieur Jules Desmarests, her husband, a broker chiefly employed by the Baron de Nucingen. The following is the history of their home life.

Monsieur Desmarests was, five years before his marriage, in a broker's office, with no other means than the meagre salary of a clerk. But he was a man to whom misfortune had early taught the truths of life, and he followed the strait path with the tenacity of an insect making for its nest; he was one of those dogged young fellows who feign death before an obstacle and wear out everybody's patience with their own beetle-like perseverance. Thus, young as he was, he had all the republican virtue of poor peoples; he was sober, saving of his time, an enemy to pleasure. He waited. Nature

had given him the immense advantage of an agreeable exterior. His calm, pure brow, the shape of his placid, but expressive face, his simple manners,— all revealed in him a laborious and resigned existence, that lofty personal dignity which is imposing to others, and the secret nobility of heart which can meet all events. His modesty inspired a sort of respect in those who knew him. Solitary in the midst of Paris, he knew the social world only by glimpses during the brief moments which he spent in his patron's salon on holidays.

There were passions in this young man, as in most of the men who live in that way, of amazing profundity,— passions too vast to be drawn into petty incidents. His want of means compelled him to lead an ascetic life, and he conquered his fancies by hard work. After paling all day over figures, he found his recreation in striving obstinately to acquire that wide general knowledge so necessary in these days to every man who wants to make his mark, whether in society, or in commerce, at the bar, or in politics or literature. The only peril these fine souls have to fear comes from their own uprightness. They see some poor girl; they love her; they marry her, and wear out their lives in a struggle between poverty and love. The noblest ambition is quenched perforce by the household account-book. Jules Desmaretz went headlong into this peril.

He met one evening at his patron's house a girl of the rarest beauty. Unfortunate men who are deprived of affection, and who consume the finest hours of youth in work and study, alone know the rapid ravages that passion makes in their lonely, misconceived hearts. They are so certain of loving truly, all their forces are concentrated so quickly on the object of their love, that they receive, while beside her, the most delightful sensations, when, as often happens, they inspire none at all. Nothing is more flattering to a woman's egotism than to divine this passion, apparently immovable, and these emotions so deep that they have needed a great length of time to reach the human surface. These poor men, anchorites in the midst of Paris, have all the enjoyments of anchorites; and may sometimes succumb to temptations. But, more often deceived, betrayed, and misunderstood, they are rarely able to gather the sweet fruits of a love which, to them, is like a flower dropped from heaven.

One smile from his wife, a single inflection of her voice sufficed to make Jules Desmarests conceive a passion which was boundless. Happily, the concentrated fire of that secret passion revealed itself artlessly to the woman who inspired it. These two beings then loved each other religiously. To express all in a word, they clasped hands without shame before

the eyes of the world and went their way like two children, brother and sister, passing serenely through a crowd where all made way for them and admired them.

The young girl was in one of those unfortunate positions which human selfishness entails upon children. She had no civil status; her name of "Clémence" and her age were recorded only by a notary public. As for her fortune, that was small indeed. Jules Desmarests was a happy man on hearing these particulars. If Clémence had belonged to an opulent family, he might have despaired of obtaining her; but she was only the poor child of love, the fruit of some terrible adulterous passion; and they were married. Then began for Jules Desmarests a series of fortunate events. Every one envied his happiness; and henceforth talked only of his luck, without recalling either his virtues or his courage.

Some days after their marriage, the mother of Clémence, who passed in society for her godmother, told Jules Desmarests to buy the office and good-will of a broker, promising to provide him with the necessary capital. In those days, such offices could still be bought at a moderate price. That evening, in the salon as it happened of his patron, a wealthy capitalist proposed, on the recommendation of the mother, a very advantageous transaction for Jules Desmarests, and the

next day the happy clerk was able to buy out his patron. In four years Desmarests became one of the most prosperous men in his business; new clients increased the number his predecessor had left to him; he inspired confidence in all; and it was impossible for him not to feel, by the way business came to him, that some hidden influence, due to his mother-in-law, or to Providence, was secretly protecting him.

At the end of the third year Clémence lost her godmother. By that time Monsieur Jules (so called to distinguish him from an elder brother, whom he had set up as a notary in Paris) possessed an income from invested property of two hundred thousand francs. There was not in all Paris another instance of the domestic happiness enjoyed by this couple. For five years their exceptional love had been troubled by only one event, — a calumny for which Monsieur Jules exacted vengeance. One of his former comrades attributed to Madame Jules the fortune of her husband, explaining that it came from a high protection dearly paid for. The man who uttered the calumny was killed in the duel that followed it.

The profound passion of this couple, which survived marriage, obtained a great success in society, though some women were annoyed by it. The charming household was respected; everybody fêted it. Monsieur and Madame Jules were sincerely liked, perhaps because

there is nothing more delightful to see than happy people; but they never stayed long at any festivity. They slipped away early, as impatient to regain their nest as wandering pigeons. This nest was a large and beautiful mansion in the rue de Ménars, where a true feeling for art tempered the luxury which the financial world continues, traditionally, to display. Here the happy pair received their society magnificently, although the obligations of social life suited them but little.

Nevertheless, Jules submitted to the demands of the world, knowing that, sooner or later, a family has need of it; but he and his wife felt themselves, in its midst, like green-house plants in a tempest. With a delicacy that was very natural, Jules had concealed from his wife the calumny and the death of the calumniator. Madame Jules, herself, was inclined, through her sensitive and artistic nature, to desire luxury. In spite of the terrible lesson of the duel, some imprudent women whispered to each other that Madame Jules must sometimes be pressed for money. They often found her more elegantly dressed in her own home than when she went into society. She loved to adorn herself to please her husband, wishing to show him that to her he was more than any social life. A true love, a pure love, above all, a happy love! Jules, always a lover, and more in love as time went by, was happy in all things beside his wife, even in her caprices;

in fact, he would have been uneasy if she had none, thinking it a symptom of some illness.

Auguste de Maulincour had the personal misfortune of running against this passion, and falling in love with the wife beyond recovery. Nevertheless, though he carried in his heart so intense a love, he was not ridiculous; he complied with all the demands of society, and of military manners and customs. And yet his face wore constantly, even though he might be drinking a glass of champagne, that dreamy look, that air of silently despising life, that nebulous expression which belongs, though for other reasons, to *blasés* men, — men dissatisfied with hollow lives. To love without hope, to be disgusted with life, constitute, in these days, a social position. The enterprise of winning the heart of a sovereign might give, perhaps, more hope than a love rashly conceived for a happy woman. Therefore Maulincour had sufficient reason to be grave and gloomy. A queen has the vanity of her power; the height of her elevation protects her. But a pious *bourgeoise* is like a hedgehog, or an oyster, in its rough wrappings.

At this moment the young officer was beside his unconscious mistress, who certainly was unaware that she was doubly faithless. Madame Jules was seated, in a naïve attitude, like the least artful woman in existence, soft and gentle, full of a majestic serenity.

What an abyss is human nature ! Before beginning a conversation, the baron looked alternately at the wife and at the husband. How many were the reflections he made ! He recomposed the “Night Thoughts” of Young in a second. And yet the music was sounding through the salons, the light was pouring from a thousand candles. It was a banker’s ball,—one of those insolent festivals by means of which the world of solid gold endeavored to sneer at the gold-embossed salons where the faubourg Saint-Germain met and laughed, not foreseeing the day when the bank would invade the Luxembourg and take its seat upon the throne. The conspirators were now dancing, indifferent to coming bankruptcies, whether of Power or of the Bank. The gilded salons of the Baron de Nucingen were gay with that peculiar animation that the world of Paris, apparently joyous at any rate, gives to its fêtes. There, men of talent communicate their wit to fools, and fools communicate that air of enjoyment that characterizes them. By means of this exchange all is liveliness. But a ball in Paris always resembles fireworks to a certain extent ; wit, coquetry, and pleasure sparkle and go out like rockets. The next day all present have forgotten their wit, their coquetry, their pleasure.

“Ah!” thought Auguste, by way of conclusion, “women are what the vidame says they are. Certainly all those dancing here are less irreproachable

actually than Madame Jules appears to be, and yet Madame Jules went to the rue Soly!"

The rue Soly was like an illness to him; the very word shrivelled his heart.

"Madame, do you ever dance?" he said to her.

"This is the third time you have asked me that question this winter," she answered, smiling.

"But perhaps you have never answered it."

"That is true."

"I knew very well that you were false, like other women."

Madame Jules continued to smile.

"Listen, monsieur," she said; "if I told you the real reason, you would think it ridiculous. I do not think it false to abstain from telling things that the world would laugh at."

"All secrets demand, in order to be told, a friendship of which I am no doubt unworthy, madame. But you cannot have any but noble secrets; do you think me capable of jesting on noble things?"

"Yes," she said, "you, like all the rest, laugh at our purest sentiments; you calumniate them. Besides, I have no secrets. I have the right to love my husband in the face of all the world, and I say so,—I am proud of it; and if you laugh at me when I tell you that I dance only with him, I shall have a bad opinion of your heart."

"Have you never danced since your marriage with any one but your husband?"

"Never. His arm is the only one on which I have leaned; I have never felt the touch of another man."

"Has your physician never felt your pulse?"

"Now you are laughing at me."

"No, madame, I admire you, because I comprehend you. But you let a man hear your voice, you let yourself be seen, you—in short, you permit our eyes to admire you—"

"Ah!" she said, interrupting him, "that is one of my griefs. Yes, I wish it were possible for a married woman to live secluded with her husband, as a mistress lives with her lover, for then—"

"Then why were you, two hours ago, on foot, disguised, in the rue Soly?"

"The rue Soly, where is that?"

And her pure voice gave no sign of any emotion; no feature of her face quivered; she did not blush; she remained calm.

"What! you did not go up to the second floor of a house in the rue des Vieux-Augustins at the corner of the rue Soly? You did not have a hackney-coach waiting near by? You did not return in it to the flower-shop in the rue Richelieu, where you bought the feathers that are now in your hair?"

"I did not leave my house this evening."

As she uttered that lie she was smiling and imperturbable ; she played with her fan ; but if any one had passed a hand down her back they would, perhaps, have found it moist. At that instant Auguste remembered the instructions of the vidame.

"Then it was some one who strangely resembled you," he said, with a credulous air.

"Monsieur," she replied, "if you are capable of following a woman and detecting her secrets, you will allow me to say that it is a wrong, a very wrong thing, and I do you the honor to say that I disbelieve you."

The baron turned away, placed himself before the fireplace and seemed thoughtful. He bent his head ; but his eyes were covertly fixed on Madame Jules, who, not remembering the reflections in the mirror, cast two or three glances at him that were full of terror. Presently she made a sign to her husband and rising took his arm to walk about the salon. As she passed before Monsieur de Maulincour, who at that moment was speaking to a friend, he said in a loud voice, as if in reply to a remark : "That woman will certainly not sleep quietly this night." Madame Jules stopped, gave him an imposing look which expressed contempt, and continued her way, unaware that another look, if surprised by her husband, might endanger not only her happiness but the lives of two men. Auguste, frantic with anger, which he tried to

smother in the depths of his soul, presently left the house, swearing to penetrate to the heart of the mystery. Before leaving, he sought Madame Jules, to look at her again; but she had disappeared.

What a drama cast into that young head so eminently romantic, like all who have not known love in the wide extent which they give to it. He adored Madame Jules under a new aspect; he loved her now with the fury of jealousy and the frenzied anguish of hope. Unfaithful to her husband, the woman became common. Auguste could now give himself up to the joys of successful love, and his imagination opened to him a career of pleasures. Yes, he had lost the angel, but he had found the most delightful of demons. He went to bed, building castles in the air, excusing Madame Jules by some romantic fiction in which he did not believe. He resolved to devote himself wholly, from that day forth, to a search for the causes, motives, and keynote of this mystery. It was a tale to read, or, better still, a drama to be played, in which he had a part.

II.

FERRAGUS.

A FINE thing is the task of a spy, when performed for one's own benefit and in the interests of a passion. Is it not giving ourselves the pleasures of a thief and a rascal while continuing honest men? But there is another side to it; we must resign ourselves to boil with anger, to roar with impatience, to freeze our feet in the mud, to be numbed, and roasted, and torn by false hopes. We must go, on the faith of a mere indication, to a vague object, miss our end, curse our luck, improvise to ourselves elegies, dithyrambics, exclaim idiotically before inoffensive pedestrians who observe us, knock over old apple-women and their baskets, run hither and thither, stand on guard beneath a window, make a thousand suppositions. But, after all, it is a chase, a hunt; a hunt in Paris, a hunt with all its chances, minus dogs and guns and the tally-ho! Nothing compares with it but the life of gamblers. But it needs a heart big with love and vengeance to ambush itself in Paris, like a tiger waiting to spring upon its prey, and to enjoy the chances and contingencies of Paris, by adding one special interest to

the many that abound there. But for this we need a many-sided soul — for must we not live in a thousand passions, a thousand sentiments?

Auguste de Maulincour flung himself into this ardent existence passionately, for he felt all its pleasures and all its misery. He went disguised about Paris, watching at the corners of the rue Pagevin and the rue des Vieux-Augustins. He hurried like a hunter from the rue de Ménars to the rue Soly, and back from the rue Soly to the rue de Ménars, without obtaining either the vengeance or the knowledge which would punish or reward such cares, such efforts, such wiles. But he had not yet reached that impatience which wrings our very entrails and makes us sweat; he roamed in hope, believing that Madame Jules would only refrain for a few days from revisiting the place where she knew she had been detected. He devoted the first days therefore, to a careful study of the secrets of the street. A novice at such work, he dared not question either the porter or the shoemaker of the house to which Madame Jules had gone; but he managed to obtain a post of observation in a house directly opposite to the mysterious apartment. He studied the ground, trying to reconcile the conflicting demands of prudence, impatience, love, and secrecy.

Early in the month of March, while busy with plans by which he expected to strike a decisive blow, he

left his post about four in the afternoon, after one of those patient watches from which he had learned nothing. He was on his way to his own house whither a matter relating to his military service called him, when he was overtaken in the rue Coquilli re by one of those heavy showers which instantly flood the gutters, while each drop of rain rings loudly in the puddles of the roadway. A pedestrian under these circumstances is forced to stop short and take refuge in a shop or *c f * if he is rich enough to pay for the forced hospitality, or, if in poorer circumstances, under a *porte-coch re*, that haven of paupers or shabbily dressed persons. Why have none of our painters ever attempted to reproduce the physiognomies of a swarm of Parisians, grouped, under stress of weather, in the damp *porte-coch re* of a building? Where could they find a richer subject? First, there's the musing philosophical pedestrian, who observes with interest all he sees,—whether it be the stripes made by the rain on the gray background of the atmosphere (a species of chasing not unlike the capricious threads of spun glass), or the whirl of white water which the wind is driving like a luminous dust along the roofs, or the fitful disgorgements of the gutter-pipes, sparkling and foaming; in short, the thousand nothings to be admired and studied with delight by loungers, in spite of the porter's broom which pretends to be sweeping out the

gateway. Then there's the talkative refugee, who complains and converses with the porter while he rests on his broom like a grenadier on his musket; or the pauper wayfarer, curled against the wall indifferent to the condition of his rags, long used, alas, to contact with the streets; or the learned pedestrian who studies, spells, and reads the posters on the walls without finishing them; or the smiling pedestrian who makes fun of others to whom some street fatality has happened, who laughs at the muddy women, and makes grimaces at those of either sex who are looking from the windows; and the silent being who gazes from floor to floor; and the working-man, armed with a satchel or a paper bundle, who is estimating the rain as a profit or loss; and the good-natured fugitive, who arrives like a shot exclaiming, "Ah! what weather, messieurs, what weather!" and bows to every one; and, finally, the true *bourgeois* of Paris, with his unfailing umbrella, an expert in showers, who foresaw this particular one, but would come out in spite of his wife; this one takes a seat in the porter's chair. According to individual character, each member of this fortuitous society contemplates the skies, and departs, skipping to avoid the mud,—because he is in a hurry, or because he sees other citizens walking along in spite of wind and slush, or because, the archway being damp and mortally catarrhal, the bed's edge, as the proverb says, is better than

the sheets. Each one has his motive. No one is left but the prudent pedestrian, the man who, before he sets forth, makes sure of a scrap of blue sky through the rifting clouds.

Monsieur de Maulincour took refuge, as we have said, with a whole family of fugitives, under the porch of an old house, the court-yard of which looked like the flue of a chimney. The sides of its plastered, nitrified, and mouldy walls were so covered with pipes and conduits from all the many floors of its four elevations, that it might have been said to resemble at that moment the *cascatelles* of Saint-Cloud. Water flowed everywhere; it boiled, it leaped, it murmured; it was black, white, blue, and green; it shrieked, it bubbled under the broom of the portress, a toothless old woman used to storms, who seemed to bless them as she swept into the street a mass of scraps an intelligent inventory of which would have revealed the lives and habits of every dweller in the house,—bits of printed cottons, tea-leaves, artificial flower-petals faded and worthless, vegetable parings, papers, scraps of metal. At every sweep of her broom the old woman bared the soul of the gutter, that black fissure on which a porter's mind is ever bent. The poor lover examined this scene, like a thousand others which our heaving Paris presents daily; but he examined it mechanically, as a man absorbed in thought, when, happening

to look up, he found himself all but nose to nose with a man who had just entered the gateway.

In appearance this man was a beggar, but not the Parisian beggar,—that creation without a name in human language; no, this man formed another type, while presenting on the outside all the ideas suggested by the word “beggar.” He was not marked by those original Parisian characteristics which strike us so forcibly in the paupers whom Charlet was fond of representing, with his rare luck in observation,—coarse faces reeking of mud, hoarse voices, reddened and bulbous noses, mouths devoid of teeth but menacing; humble yet terrible beings, in whom a profound intelligence shining in their eyes seems like a contradiction. Some of these bold vagabonds have blotched, cracked, veiny skins; their foreheads are covered with wrinkles, their hair scanty and dirty, like a wig thrown on a dust-heap. All are gay in their degradation, and degraded in their joys; all are marked with the stamp of debauchery, casting their silence as a reproach; their very attitude revealing fearful thoughts. Placed between crime and beggary they have no compunctions, and circle prudently around the scaffold without mounting it, innocent in the midst of crime, and vicious in their innocence. They often cause a laugh, but they always cause reflection. One represents to you civilization stunted, repressed; he comprehends everything,

the honor of the galleys, patriotism, virtue, the malice of a vulgar crime, or the fine astuteness of elegant wickedness. Another is resigned, a perfect mimer, but stupid. All have slight yearnings after order and work, but they are pushed back into their mire by society, which makes no inquiry as to what there may be of great men, poets, intrepid souls, and splendid organizations among these vagrants, these gypsies of Paris; a people eminently good and eminently evil—like all the masses who suffer—accustomed to endure unspeakable woes, and whom a fatal power holds ever down to the level of the mire. They all have a dream, a hope, a happiness,—cards, lottery, or wine.

There was nothing of all this in the personage who now leaned carelessly against the wall in front of Monsieur de Maulincour, like some fantastic idea drawn by an artist on the back of a canvas the front of which is turned to the wall. This tall, spare man, whose leaden visage expressed some deep but chilling thought, dried up all pity in the hearts of those who looked at him by the scowling look and the sarcastic attitude which announced an intention of treating every man as an equal. His face was of a dirty white, and his wrinkled skull, denuded of hair, bore a vague resemblance to a block of granite. A few gray locks on either side of his head fell straight to the collar of his greasy coat, which was buttoned to the chin. He

resembled both Voltaire and Don Quixote; he was, apparently, scoffing but melancholy, full of disdain and philosophy, but half-crazy. He seemed to have no shirt. His beard was long. A rusty black cravat, much worn and ragged, exposed a protuberant neck deeply furrowed, with veins as thick as cords. A large brown circle like a bruise was strongly marked beneath his eyes. He seemed to be at least sixty years old. His hands were white and clean. His boots were trodden down at the heels, and full of holes. A pair of blue trousers, mended in various places, were covered with a species of fluff which made them offensive to the eye. Whether it was that his damp clothes exhaled a fetid odor, or that he had in his normal condition the "poor smell" which belongs to Parisian tenements, just as offices, sacristies, and hospitals have their own peculiar and rancid fetidness, of which no words can give the least idea, or whether some other reason affected them, those in the vicinity of this man immediately moved away and left him alone. He cast upon them and also upon the officer a calm, expressionless look, the celebrated look of Monsieur de Talleyrand, a dull, wan glance, without warmth, a species of impenetrable veil, beneath which a strong soul hides profound emotions and close estimation of men and things and events. Not a fold of his face quivered. His mouth

and forehead were impassible; but his eyes moved and lowered themselves with a noble, almost tragic slowness. There was, in fact, a whole drama in the motion of those withered eyelids.

The aspect of this stoical figure gave rise in Monsieur de Maulincour to one of those vagabond reveries which begin with a common question and end by comprising a world of thought. The storm was past. Monsieur de Maulincour presently saw no more of the man than the tail of his coat as it brushed the gate-post, but as he turned to leave his own place he noticed at his feet a letter which must have fallen from the unknown beggar when he took, as the baron had seen him take, a handkerchief from his pocket. The young man picked it up, and read, involuntarily, the address: "To Monsieur Ferragusse, Rue des Grands-Augustains, corner of rue Soly."

The letter bore no postmark, and the address prevented Monsieur de Maulincour from following the beggar and returning it; for there are few passions that will not fail in rectitude in the long run. The baron had a presentiment of the opportunity afforded by this windfall. He determined to keep the letter, which would give him the right to enter the mysterious house to return it to the strange man, not doubting that he lived there. Suspicions, vague as the first faint gleams of daylight, made him fancy relations between

this man and Madame Jules. A jealous lover supposes everything; and it is by supposing everything and selecting the most probable of their conjectures that judges, spies, lovers, and observers get at the truth they are looking for.

"Is the letter for him? Is it from Madame Jules?"

His restless imagination tossed a thousand such questions to him; but when he read the first words of the letter he smiled. Here it is, textually, in all the simplicity of its artless phrases and its miserable orthography,—a letter to which it would be impossible to add anything, or to take anything away, unless it were the letter itself. But we have yielded to the necessity of punctuating it. In the original there were neither commas nor stops of any kind, not even notes of exclamation,—a fact which tends to undervalue the system of notes and dashes by which modern authors have endeavored to depict the great disasters of all the passions:—

HENRY,—Among the manny sacrificisis I imposed upon myself for your sake was that of not giving you anny news of me; but an iresistible voise now compells me to let you know the wrong you have done me. I know beforehand that your soul hardened in vise will not pitty me. Your heart is deaf to feeling. Is it deaf to the cries of nature? But what matter? I must tell you to what a dredful point you are gilty, and the horror of the position to which you have brought me. Henry, you knew what I sufered from

my first wrong-doing, and yet you plunged me into the same misery, and then abandoned me to my dispair and sufering. Yes, I will say it, the belif I had that you loved me and esteemed me gave me corage to bare my fate. But now, what have I left? Have you not made me loose all that was dear to me, all that held me to life; parents, frends, onor, reputation, — all, I have sacrificed all to you, and nothing is left me but shame, oprobrium, and — I say this without blushing — poverty. Nothing was wanting to my misfortunes but the sertainty of your contempt and hatred; and now I have them I find the corage that my project requires. My desision is made; the onor of my family commands it. I must put an end to my suferins. Make no remarks upon my conduct, Henry; it is orful, I know, but my condition obbliges me. Without help, without supòrt, without one frend to comfort me, can I live? No. Fate has desided for me. So in two days, Henry, two days, Ida will have ceased to be worthy of your esteem. But hear the oath I make, that my conshence is at peace, for I have never ceased to be worthy of your regard. Oh, Henry! oh, my frend! for I can never change to you, promise me to forgive me for what I am going to do. Do not forget that you have driven me to it; it is your work, and you must judge it. May heven not punish you for all your crimes. I ask your pardon on my knees, for I feel nothing is wanting to my misery but the sorrow of knowing you unhappy. In spite of the poverty I am in I shall refuse all help from you. If you had lovèd me I would have taken all from your frendship; but a benfit given by pitty *my soul refussis.* I would be baser to take it than he who ofered it. I have one favor to ask of you. I don't know how long I must stay at Madame Meynardie's; be genrous enough not

to come there. Your last two vissits did me a harm I cannot get ofer. I cannot enter into particlers about that conduct of yours. You hate me,—you said so; that word is writhen on my heart, and freezes it with fear. Alas! it is now, when I need all my corage, all my strength, that my facultties abandon me. Henry, my frend, before I put a barrier forever between us, give me a last pruf of your esteem. Write me, answer me, say you respect me still, though you have ceased to love me. My eyes are worthy still to look into yours, but I do not ask an interfew; I fear my weakness and my love. But for pitty's sake write me a line at once; it will give me the corage I need to meet my trubbles. Farewell, orther of all my woes, but the only frend my heart has chosen and will never forget.

IDA.

This life of a young girl, with its love betrayed, its fatal joys, its pangs, its miseries, and its horrible resignation, summed up in a few words, this humble poem, essentially Parisian, written on dirty paper, influenced for a passing moment Monsieur de Maulincour. He asked himself whether this Ida might not be some poor relation of Madame Jules, and that strange rendezvous, which he had witnessed by chance, the mere necessity of a charitable effort. But could that old pauper have seduced this Ida? There was something impossible in the very idea. Wandering in this labyrinth of reflections, which crossed, recrossed, and obliterated one another, the baron reached the rue Pagevin, and saw a hackney-coach standing at the end

of the rue des Vieux-Augustins where it enters the rue Montmartre. All waiting hackney-coaches now had an interest for him.

"Can she be there?" he thought to himself, and his heart beat fast with a hot and feverish throbbing.

He pushed the little door with the bell, but he lowered his head as he did so, obeying a sense of shame, for a voice said to him secretly:—

"Why are you putting your foot into this mystery?"

He went up a few steps, and found himself face to face with the old portress.

"Monsieur Ferragus?" he said.

"Don't know him."

"Does n't Monsieur Ferragus live here?"

"Have n't such a name in the house."

"But, my good woman — "

"I'm not your good woman, monsieur, I'm the portress."

"But, madame," persisted the baron, "I have a letter for Monsieur Ferragus."

"Ah! if monsieur has a letter," she said, changing her tone, "that's another matter. Will you let me see it — that letter?"

Auguste showed the folded letter. The old woman shook her head with a doubtful air, hesitated, seemed to wish to leave the lodge and inform the mysterious Ferragus of his unexpected visitor, but finally said:—

"Very good; go up, monsieur. I suppose you know the way?"

Without replying to this remark, which he thought might be a trap, the young officer ran lightly up the stairway, and rang loudly at the door of the second floor. His lover's instinct told him, "She is there."

The beggar of the porch, Ferragus, the "orther" of Ida's woes, opened the door himself. He appeared in a flowered dressing-gown, white flannel trousers, his feet in embroidered slippers, and his face washed clean of stains. Madame Jules, whose head projected beyond the casing of the door into the next room, turned pale and dropped into a chair.

"What is the matter, madame?" cried the officer, springing toward her.

But Ferragus stretched forth an arm and flung the intruder back with so sharp a thrust that Auguste fancied he had received a blow from an iron bar full on his chest.

"Back! monsieur," said the man. "What do you want here? For five or six days you have been roaming about the neighborhood. Are you a spy?"

"Are you Monsieur Ferragus?" said the baron.

"No, monsieur."

"Nevertheless," continued Auguste, "it is to you that I must return this paper which you dropped in the gateway beneath which we both took refuge from the rain."

While speaking and offering the letter to the man, Auguste did not refrain from casting an eye around the room where Ferragus received him. It was very well arranged, though simply. A fire burned on the hearth; and near it was a table with food upon it, which was served more sumptuously than agreed with the apparent condition of the man and the poorness of his lodging. On a sofa in the next room, which he could see through the doorway, lay a heap of gold, and he heard a sound which could be no other than that of a woman weeping.

"The paper belongs to me; I am much obliged to you," said the mysterious man, turning away as if to make the baron understand that he must go.

Too curious himself to take much note of the deep examination of which he was himself the object, Auguste did not see the half-magnetic glance with which this strange being seemed to pierce him; had he encountered that basilisk eye he might have felt the danger that encompassed him. Too passionately excited to think of himself, Auguste bowed, went down the stairs, and returned home, striving to find a meaning in the connection of these three persons,—Ida, Ferragus, and Madame Jules; an occupation equivalent to that of trying to arrange the many-cornered bits of a Chinese puzzle without possessing the key to the game. But Madame Jules had seen him, Madame

Jules went there, Madame Jules had lied to him. Maulincour determined to go and see her the next day. She could not refuse his visit, for he was now her accomplice; he was hands and feet in the mysterious affair, and she knew it. Already he felt himself a sultan, and thought of demanding from Madame Jules, imperiously, all her secrets.

In those days Paris was seized with a building-fever. If Paris is a monster, it is certainly a most mania-ridden monster. It becomes enamoured of a thousand fancies: sometimes it has a mania for building, like a great seigneur who loves a trowel; soon it abandons the trowel and becomes all military; it arrays itself from head to foot as a national guard, and drills and smokes; suddenly, it abandons military manœuvres and flings away cigars; it is commercial, care-worn, falls into bankruptcy, sells its furniture on the place du Châtelet, files its schedule; but a few days later, lo! it has arranged its affairs and is giving fêtes and dances. One day it eats barley-sugar by the mouthful, by the handful; yesterday it bought "papier Weynen;" to-day the monster's teeth ache, and it applies to its walls an alexipharmatic to mitigate their dampness; to-morrow it will lay in a provision of pectoral paste. It has its manias for the month, for the season, for the year, like its manias of a day.

So, at the moment of which we speak, all the world

was building or pulling down something, — people hardly knew what as yet. There were very few streets in which high scaffoldings on long poles could not be seen, fastened from floor to floor with transverse blocks inserted into holes in the walls on which the planks were laid, — a frail construction, shaken by the brick-layers, but held together by ropes, white with plaster, and insecurely protected from the wheels of carriages by the breastwork of planks which the law requires round all such buildings. There is something maritime in these masts, and ladders, and cordage, even in the shouts of the masons. About a dozen yards from the hotel Maulincour, one of these ephemeral barriers was erected before a house which was then being built of blocks of free-stone. The day after the event we have just related, at the moment when the Baron de Maulincour was passing this scaffolding in his cabriolet on his way to see Madame Jules, a stone, two feet square, which was being raised to the upper storey of this building, got loose from the ropes and fell, crushing the baron's servant who was behind the cabriolet. A cry of horror shook both the scaffold and the masons; one of them, apparently unable to keep his grasp on a pole, was in danger of death, and seemed to have been touched by the stone as it passed him.

A crowd collected rapidly; the masons came down the ladders swearing and insisting that Monsieur de

Maulincour's cabriolet had been driven against the boarding and so had shaken their crane. Two inches more and the stone would have fallen on the baron's head. The groom was dead, the carriage shattered. 'Twas an event for the whole neighborhood, the newspapers told of it. Monsieur de Maulincour, certain that he had not touched the boarding, complained; the case went to court. Inquiry being made, it was shown that a small boy, armed with a lath, had mounted guard and called to all foot-passengers to keep away. The affair ended there. Monsieur de Maulincour obtained no redress. He had lost his servant, and was confined to his bed for some days, for the back of the carriage when shattered had bruised him severely, and the nervous shock of the sudden surprise gave him a fever. He did not, therefore, go to see Madame Jules.

Ten days after this event, he left the house for the first time, in his repaired cabriolet, when, as he drove down the rue de Bourgogne and was close to the sewer opposite to the Chamber of Députies, the axle-tree broke in two, and the baron was driving so rapidly that the breakage would have caused the two wheels to come together with force enough to break his head, had it not been for the resistance of the leather hood. Nevertheless, he was badly wounded in the side. For the second time in ten days he was carried home in a fainting condition to his terrified grandmother. This

second accident gave him a feeling of distrust; he thought, though vaguely, of Ferragus and Madame Jules. To throw light on these suspicions he had the broken axle brought to his room and sent for his carriage-maker. The man examined the axle and the fracture, and proved two things: First, the axle was not made in his workshop; he furnished none that did not bear the initials of his name on the iron. But he could not explain by what means this axle had been substituted for the other. Secondly, the breakage of the suspicious axle was caused by a hollow space having been blown in it and a straw very cleverly inserted.

"Eh! Monsieur le baron, whoever did that was malicious!" he said; "any one would swear, to look at it, that the axle was sound."

Monsieur de Maulincour begged the carriage-maker to say nothing of the affair; but he felt himself warned. These two attempts at murder were planned with an ability which denoted the enmity of intelligent minds.

"It is war to the death," he said to himself, as he tossed in his bed,—"a war of savages, skulking in ambush, of trickery and treachery, declared in the name of Madame Jules. What sort of man is this to whom she belongs? What species of power does this Ferragus wield?"

Monsieur de Maulincour, though a soldier and brave man, could not repress a shudder. In the midst of

many thoughts that now assailed him, there was one against which he felt he had neither defence nor courage: might not poison be employed ere long by his secret enemies? Under the influence of fears, which his momentary weakness and fever and low diet increased, he sent for an old woman long attached to the service of his grandmother, whose affection for himself was one of those semi-maternal sentiments which are the sublime of the commonplace. Without confiding in her wholly, he charged her to buy secretly and daily, in different localities, the food he needed; telling her to keep it under lock and key and bring it to him herself, not allowing any one, no matter who, to approach her while preparing it. He took the most minute precautions to protect himself against that form of death. He was ill in his bed and alone, and he had therefore the leisure to think of his own security,—the one necessity clear-sighted enough to enable human egotism to forget nothing!

But the unfortunate man had poisoned his own life by this dread, and, in spite of himself, suspicion dyed all his hours with its gloomy tints. These two lessons of attempted assassination did teach him, however, the value of one of the virtues most necessary to a public man; he saw the wise dissimulation that must be practised in dealing with the great interests of life. To be silent about our own secret is nothing; but to be

silent from the start, to forget a fact as Ali Pacha did for thirty years in order to be sure of a vengeance waited for for thirty years, is a fine study in a land where there are few men who can keep their own counsel for thirty days. Monsieur de Maulincour literally lived only through Madame Jules. He was perpetually absorbed in a sober examination into the means he ought to employ to triumph in this mysterious struggle with these mysterious persons. His secret passion for that woman grew by reason of all these obstacles. Madame Jules was ever there, erect, in the midst of his thoughts, in the centre of his heart, more seductive by her presumable vices than by the positive virtues for which he had made her his idol.

At last, anxious to reconnoitre the position of the enemy, he thought he might without danger initiate the vidame into the secrets of his situation. The old commander loved Auguste as a father loves his wife's children; he was shrewd, dexterous, and very diplomatic. He listened to the baron, shook his head, and they both held counsel. The worthy vidame did not share his young friend's confidence when Auguste declared that in the times in which they now lived, the police and the government were able to lay bare all mysteries, and that if it were absolutely necessary to have recourse to those powers, he should find them most powerful auxiliaries.

The old man replied, gravely: "The police, my dear boy, is the most incompetent thing on this earth, and government the feeblest in all matters concerning individuals. Neither the police nor the government can read hearts. What we might reasonably ask of them is to search for the causes of an act. But the police and the government are both eminently unfit for that; they lack, essentially, the personal interest which reveals all to him who wants to know all. No human power can prevent an assassin or a poisoner from reaching the heart of a prince or the stomach of an honest man. Passions are the best police."

The vidame strongly advised the baron to go to Italy, and from Italy to Greece, from Greece to Syria, from Syria to Asia, and not to return until his secret enemies were convinced of his repentance, and would so make tacit peace with him. But if he did not take that course, then the vidame advised him to stay in the house, and even in his own room, where he would be safe from the attempts of this man Ferragus, and not to leave it until he could be certain of crushing him.

"We should never touch an enemy until we can be sure of taking his head off," he said, gravely.

The old man, however, promised his favorite to employ all the astuteness with which Heaven had provided him (without compromising any one) in recon-

noitring the enemy's ground, and laying his plans for future victory. The Commander had in his service a retired Figaro, the wiliest monkey that ever walked in human form; in earlier days as clever as a devil, working his body like a galley-slave, alert as a thief, sly as a woman, but now fallen into the decadence of genius for want of practice since the new constitution of Parisian society, which has reformed even the valets of comedy. This Scapin emeritus was attached to his master as to a superior being; but the shrewd old vidame added a good round sum yearly to the wages of his former provost of gallantry, which strengthened the ties of natural affection by the bonds of self-interest, and obtained for the old gentleman as much care as the most loving mistress could bestow on a sick friend. It was this pearl of the old-fashioned comedy-valets, relic of the last century, auxiliary incorruptible from lack of passions to satisfy, on whom the old vidame and Monsieur de Maulincour now relied.

"Monsieur le baron will spoil all," said the great man in livery, when called into counsel. "Monsieur should eat, drink, and sleep in peace. I take the whole matter upon myself."

Accordingly, eight days after the conference, when Monsieur de Maulincour, perfectly restored to health, was breakfasting with his grandmother and the vidame, Justin entered to make his report. As soon as the

dowager had returned to her own apartments he said, with that mock modesty which men of talent are so apt to affect : —

“ Ferragus is not the name of the enemy who is pursuing Monsieur le baron. This man — this devil, rather — is called Gratien, Henri, Victor, Jean-Joseph Bourignard. The Sieur Gratien Bourignard is a former ship-builder, once very rich, and, above all, one of the handsomest men of his day in Paris, — a Lovelace, capable of seducing Grandison. My information stops short there. He has been a simple workman ; and the Companions of the Order of the Dévorants did, at one time, elect him as their chief, under the title of Ferragus XXIII. The police ought to know that, if the police were instituted to know anything. The man has moved from the rue des Vieux-Augustins, and now roosts rue Joquelet, where Madame Jules Desmaretz goes frequently to see him ; sometimes her husband, on his way to the Bourse, drives her as far as the rue Vivienne, or she drives her husband to the Bourse. Monsieur le vidame knows about these things too well to want me to tell him if it is the husband who takes the wife, or the wife who takes the husband ; but Madame Jules is so pretty, I ’d bet on her. All that I have told you is positive. Bourignard often plays at number 129. Saving your presence, monsieur, he ’s a rogue who loves women, and he has his little ways like a man of con-

dition. As for the rest, he wins sometimes, disguises himself like an actor, paints his face to look like anything he chooses, and lives, I may say, the most original life in the world. I don't doubt he has a good many lodgings, for most of the time he manages to evade what Monsieur le vidame calls "parliamentary investigations." If monsieur wishes, he could be disposed of honorably, seeing what his habits are. It is always easy to get rid of a man who loves women. However, this capitalist talks about moving again. Have Monsieur le vidame and Monsieur le baron any other commands to give me?"

"Justin, I am satisfied with you; don't go any farther in the matter without my orders, but keep a close watch here, so that Monsieur le baron may have nothing to fear."

"My dear boy," continued the vidame, when they were alone, "go back to your old life, and forget Madame Jules."

"No, no," said Auguste; "I will never yield to Gratien Bourignard. I will have him bound hand and foot, and Madame Jules also."

That evening the Baron Auguste de Maulincour, recently promoted to higher rank in the company of the Body-Guard of the king, went to a ball given by Madame la Duchesse de Berry at the Élysée-Bourbon. There, certainly, no danger could lurk for him; and

yet, before he left the palace, he had an affair of honor on his hands,—an affair it was impossible to settle except by a duel.

His adversary, the Marquis de Ronquerolles, considered that he had strong reasons to complain of Monsieur de Maulincour, who had given some ground for it during his former intimacy with Monsieur de Ronquerolles' sister, the Comtesse de Sérizy. That lady, the one who detested German sentimentality, was all the more exacting in the matter of prudery. By one of those inexplicable fatalities, Auguste now uttered a harmless jest which Madame de Sérizy took amiss, and her brother resented it. The discussion took place in the corner of a room, in a low voice. In good society, adversaries never raise their voices. The next day the faubourg Saint-Germain and the Château talked over the affair. Madame de Sérizy was warmly defended, and all the blame was laid on Maulincour. Auguste personages interfered. Seconds of the highest distinction were imposed on Messieurs de Maulincour and de Ronquerolles and every precaution was taken on the ground that no one should be killed.

When Auguste found himself face to face with his antagonist, a man of pleasure, to whom no one could possibly deny sentiments of the highest honor, he felt it was impossible to believe him the instrument of Ferragus, chief of the Dévorants; and yet he was

compelled, as it were, by an inexplicable presentiment, to question the marquis.

"Messieurs," he said to the seconds, "I certainly do not refuse to meet the fire of Monsieur de Ronquerolles; but before doing so, I here declare that I was to blame, and I offer him whatever excuses he may desire, and publicly if he wishes it; because when the matter concerns a woman, nothing, I think, can degrade a man of honor. I therefore appeal to his generosity and good sense; is there not something rather silly in fighting without a cause?"

Monsieur de Ronquerolles would not allow of this way of ending the affair, and then the baron, his suspicions revived, walked up to him.

"Well, then! Monsieur le marquis," he said, "pledge me, in presence of these gentlemen, your word as a gentleman that you have no other reason for vengeance than that you have chosen to put forward."

"Monsieur, that is a question you have no right to ask."

So saying, Monsieur de Ronquerolles took his place. It was agreed, in advance, that the adversaries were to be satisfied with one exchange of shots. Monsieur de Ronquerolles, in spite of the great distance determined by the seconds, which seemed to make the death of either party problematical, if not impossible, brought down the baron. The ball went through the latter's

body just below the heart, but fortunately without doing vital injury.

"You aimed too well, monsieur," said the baron, "to be avenging only a paltry quarrel."

And he fainted. Monsieur de Ronquerolles, who believed him to be a dead man, smiled sardonically as he heard those words.

After a fortnight, during which time the dowager and the vidame gave him those cares of old age the secret of which is in the hands of long experience only, the baron began to return to life. But one morning his grandmother dealt him a crushing blow, by revealing anxieties to which, in her last days, she was now subjected. She showed him a letter signed F, in which the history of her grandson's secret espionage was recounted step by step. The letter accused Monsieur de Maulincour of actions that were unworthy of a man of honor. He had, it said, placed an old woman at the stand of hackney-coaches in the rue de Ménars; an old spy, who pretended to sell water from her cask to the coachmen, but who was really there to watch the actions of Madame Jules Desmarests. He had spied upon the daily life of a most inoffensive man, in order to detect his secrets,—secrets on which depended the lives of three persons. He had brought upon himself a relentless struggle, in which, although he had escaped with life three times, he must inevitably succumb,

because his death had been sworn and would be compassed if all human means were employed upon it. Monsieur de Maulincour could no longer escape his fate by even promising to respect the mysterious life of these three persons, because it was impossible to believe the word of a gentleman who had fallen to the level of a police-spy: and for what reason? Merely to trouble the respectable life of an innocent woman and a harmless old man.

The letter itself was nothing to Auguste in comparison with the tender reproaches of his grandmother. To lack respect to a woman! to spy upon her actions without a right to do so! Ought a man ever to spy upon a woman whom he loved? — in short, she poured out a torrent of those excellent reasons which prove nothing; and they put the young baron, for the first time in his life, into one of those great human furies in which are born, and from which issue the most vital actions of a man's life.

“ Since it is war to the knife,” he said in conclusion, “ I shall kill my enemy by any means that I can lay hold of.”

The vidame went immediately, at Auguste's request, to the chief of the private police of Paris, and without bringing Madame Jules' name or person into the narrative, although they were really the gist of it, he made the official aware of the fears of the family of Maulin-

cour about this mysterious person who was bold enough to swear the death of an officer of the Guards, in defiance of the law and the police. The chief pushed up his green spectacles in amazement, blew his nose several times, and offered snuff to the vidame, who, to save his dignity, pretended not to use tobacco, although his own nose was discolored with it. Then the chief took notes and promised, Vidocq and his spies aiding, to send in a report within a few days to the Maulincour family, assuring them meantime that there were no secrets for the police of Paris.

A few days after this the police official called to see the vidame at the Hôtel de Maulincour, where he found the young baron quite recovered from his last wound. He gave them in bureaucratic style his thanks for the indications they had afforded him, and told them that Bourignard was a convict, condemned to twenty years' hard labor, who had miraculously escaped from a gang which was being transported from Bicêtre to Toulon. For thirteen years the police had been endeavoring to recapture him, knowing that he had boldly returned to Paris; but so far this convict had escaped the most active search, although he was known to be mixed up in many nefarious deeds. However, the man, whose life was full of very curious incidents, would certainly be captured now in one or other of his several domiciles and

delivered up to justice. The bureaucrat ended his report by saying to Monsieur de Maulincour that if he attached enough importance to the matter to wish to witness the capture of Bourignard, he might come the next day at eight in the morning to a house in the rue Sainte-Foi, of which he gave him the number. Monsieur de Maulincour excused himself from going personally in search of certainty,—trusting, with the sacred respect inspired by the police of Paris, in the capability of the authorities.

Three days later, hearing nothing, and seeing nothing in the newspapers about the projected arrest, which was certainly of enough importance to have furnished an article, Monsieur de Maulincour was beginning to feel anxieties which were presently allayed by the following letter:—

MONSIEUR LE BARON,—I have the honor to announce to you that you need have no further uneasiness touching the affair in question. The man named Gratien Bourignard, otherwise called Ferragus, died yesterday, at his lodgings, rue Joquelet No. 7. The suspicions we naturally conceived as to the identity of the dead body have been completely set at rest by the facts. The physician of the Prefecture of police was despatched by us to assist the physician of the arrondissement, and the chief of the detective police made all the necessary verifications to obtain absolute certainty. Moreover, the character of the persons who signed the certificate of death, and the affidavits of those who took care of the said Bourignard in his last illness, among others

that of the worthy vicar of the church of the Bonne-Nouvelle (to whom he made his last confession, for he died a Christian), do not permit us to entertain any sort of doubt.

Accept, Monsieur le baron, etc., etc.

Monsieur de Maulincour, the dowager, and the vidame breathed again with joy unspeakable. The good old woman kissed her grandson leaving a tear upon his cheek, and went away to thank God in prayer. The dear soul, who was making a novena for Auguste's safety, believed her prayers were answered.

"Well," said the vidame, "now you had better show yourself at the ball you were speaking of. I oppose no further objections."

III.

THE WIFE ACCUSED.

MONSIEUR DE MAULINCOURT was all the more anxious to go to this ball because he knew that Madame Jules would be present. The fête was given by the Prefect of the Seine, in whose salons the two social worlds of Paris met as on neutral ground. Auguste passed through the rooms without finding the woman who now exercised so mighty an influence on his fate. He entered an empty boudoir where card-tables were placed awaiting players; and sitting down on a divan he gave himself up to the most contradictory thoughts about her. A man presently took the young officer by the arm, and looking up the baron was stupefied to behold the pauper of the rue Coquillière, the Ferragus of Ida, the lodger in the rue Soly, the Bourignard of Justin, the convict of the police, and the dead man of the day before.

"Monsieur, not a sound, not a word," said Bourignard, whose voice he recognized. The man was elegantly dressed; he wore the order of the Golden-Fleece, and a medal on his coat. "Monsieur," he continued, and his voice was sibilant like that of a hyena,

"you increase my efforts against you by having recourse to the police. You will perish, monsieur; it has now become necessary. Do you love Madame Jules? Are you beloved by her? By what right do you trouble her peaceful life, and blacken her virtue?"

Some one entered the card-room. Ferragus rose to go.

"Do you know this man?" asked Monsieur de Maulincour of the new-comer, seizing Ferragus by the collar. But Ferragus quickly disengaged himself, took Monsieur de Maulincour by the hair, and shook his head rapidly.

"Must you have lead in it to make it steady?" he said.

"I do not know him personally," replied Henri de Marsay, the spectator of this scene, "but I know that he is Monsieur de Funcal, a rich Portuguese."

Monsieur de Funcal had disappeared. The baron followed but without being able to overtake him until he reached the peristyle, where he saw Ferragus, who looked at him with a jeering laugh from a brilliant equipage which was driven away at high speed.

"Monsieur," said Auguste, re-entering the salon and addressing de Marsay, whom he knew, "I entreat you to tell me where Monsieur de Funcal lives."

"I do not know; but some one here can no doubt tell you."

The baron, having questioned the prefect, ascertained that the Comte de Funcal lived at the Portuguese embassy. At this moment, while he still felt the icy fingers of that strange man in his hair, he saw Madame Jules in all her dazzling beauty, fresh, gracious, artless, resplendent with the sanctity of womanhood which had won his love. This creature, now infernal to him, excited no emotion in his soul but that of hatred; and this hatred shone in a savage, terrible look from his eyes. He watched for the moment when he could speak to her unheard, and then he said:—

“Madame, your *bravi* have missed me three times.”

“What can you mean, monsieur?” she said, flushing. “I know that you have had several unfortunate accidents lately, which I have greatly regretted; but how could I have had anything to do with them?”

“You knew that *bravi* were employed against me by that man of the rue Soly?”

“Monsieur!”

“Madame, I now call you to account, not for my happiness only, but for my blood —”

At this instant Jules Desmarests approached them.

“What are you saying to my wife, monsieur?”

“Make that inquiry at my own house, monsieur, if you are curious,” said Maulincour, moving away, and leaving Madame Jules in an almost fainting condition.

There are few women who have not found them-

selves, once at least in their lives, *à propos* of some undeniable fact, confronted with a direct, sharp, uncompromising question,— one of those questions pitilessly asked by husbands, the mere apprehension of which gives a chill, while the actual words enter the heart like the blade of a dagger. It is from such crises that the maxim has come, “All women lie.” • Falsehood, kindly falsehood, venial falsehood, sublime falsehood, horrible falsehood,— but always the necessity to lie. This necessity admitted, ought they not to know how to lie well? French women do it admirably. Our manners and customs teach them deception! Besides, women are so naïvely saucy, so pretty, graceful, and withal so true in lying, — they recognize so fully the utility of doing so in order to avoid in social life the violent shocks which happiness might not resist,— that lying is seen to be as necessary to their lives as the cottonwool in which they put away their jewels. Falsehood becomes to them the foundation of speech; truth is exceptional; they tell it, if they are virtuous, by caprice or by calculation. According to individual character, some women laugh when they lie; others weep; others are grave; some grow angry. After beginning life by feigning indifference to the homage that deeply flatters them, they often end by lying to themselves. Who has not admired their apparent superiority to everything at the very moment when

they are trembling for the secret treasures of their love? Who has never studied their ease, their readiness, their freedom of mind in the greatest embarrassments of life? In them, nothing is put on. Deception comes as the snow from heaven. And then, with what art they discover the truth in others! With what shrewdness they employ a direct logic in answer to some passionate question which has revealed to them the secret of the heart of a man who was guileless enough to proceed by questioning! To question a woman! why, that is delivering one's self up to her; does she not learn in that way all that we seek to hide from her? Does she not know also how to be dumb, though speaking? What men are daring enough to struggle with the Parisian woman?—a woman who knows how to hold herself above all dagger thrusts, saying: “ You are very inquisitive; what is it to you? Why do wish to know? Ah! you are jealous! And suppose I do not choose to answer you?”—in short, a woman who possesses the hundred and thirty-seven methods of saying *No*, and incommensurable variations of the word *Yes*. Is not a treatise on the words *yes* and *no*, a fine diplomatic, philosophic, logographic, and moral work, still waiting to be written? But to accomplish this work, which we may also call diabolic, is n't an androgynous genius necessary? For that reason, probably, it will never be attempted. And besides, of

all unpublished works is n't it the best known and the best practised among women? Have you studied the behavior, the pose, the *disinvoltura* of a falsehood? Examine it.

Madame Desmarests was seated in the right-hand corner of her carriage, her husband in the left. Having forced herself to recover from her emotion in the ball-room, she now affected a calm demeanor. Her husband had then said nothing to her, and he still said nothing. Jules looked out of the carriage window at the black walls of the silent houses before which they passed; but suddenly, as if driven by a determining thought, when turning the corner of a street he examined his wife, who appeared to be cold in spite of the fur-lined pelisse in which she was wrapped. He thought she seemed pensive, and perhaps she was really so. Of all communicable things, reflection and gravity are the most contagious.

"What could Monsieur de Maulincour have said to affect you so keenly?" said Jules; "and why does he wish me to go to his house and find out?"

"He can tell you nothing in his house that I cannot tell you here," she replied.

Then, with that feminine craft which always slightly degrades virtue, Madame Jules waited for another question. Her husband turned his face back to the houses, and continued his study of their walls.

Another question would imply suspicion, distrust. To suspect a woman is a crime in love. Jules had already killed a man for doubting his wife. Clémence did not know all there was of true passion, of loyal reflection, in her husband's silence ; just as Jules was ignorant of the generous drama that was wringing the heart of his Clémence.

The carriage rolled on through a silent Paris, bearing the couple, — two lovers who adored each other, and who, gently leaning on the same silken cushion, were being parted by an abyss. In these elegant coupés returning from a ball between midnight and two in the morning, how many curious and singular scenes must pass, — meaning those coupés with lanterns, which light both the street and the carriage, those with their windows unshaded ; in short, legitimate coupés, in which couples can quarrel without caring for the eyes of pedestrians, because the civil code gives a right to provoke, or beat, or kiss, a wife in a carriage or elsewhere, anywhere, everywhere ! How many secrets must be revealed in this way to nocturnal pedestrians, — to those young fellows who have gone to a ball in a carriage, but are obliged, for whatever cause it may be, to return on foot. It was the first time that Jules and Clémence had been together thus, — each in a corner ; usually the husband pressed close to his wife.

"It is very cold," remarked Madame Jules.

But her husband did not hear her; he was studying the signs above the shop windows.

"Clémence," he said at last, "forgive me the question I am about to ask you."

He came closer, took her by the waist, and drew her to him.

"My God, it is coming!" thought the poor woman. "Well," she said aloud, anticipating the question, "you want to know what Monsieur de Maulincour said to me. I will tell you, Jules; but not without fear. Good God! how is it possible that you and I should have secrets from one another? For the last few moments I have seen you struggling between a conviction of our love and vague fears. But that conviction is clear within us, is it not? And these doubts and fears, do they not seem to you dark and unnatural? Why not stay in that clear light of love you cannot doubt? When I have told you all, you will still desire to know more; and yet I myself do not know what the extraordinary words of that man meant. What I fear is that this may lead to some fatal affair between you. I would rather that we both forget this unpleasant moment. But, in any case, swear to me that you will let this singular adventure explain itself naturally. Here are the facts. Monsieur de Maulincour declared to me that the three accidents you have heard mentioned —

the falling of a stone on his servant, the breaking down of his cabriolet, and his duel about Madame de Sérizy — were the result of some plot I had laid against him. He also threatened to reveal to you the cause of my desire to destroy him. Can you imagine what all this means? My emotion came from the sight of his face convulsed with madness, his haggard eyes, and also his words, broken by some violent inward emotion. I thought him mad. That is all that took place. Now, I should be less than a woman if I had not perceived that for over a year I have become, as they call it, the passion of Monsieur de Maulincour. He has never seen me except at a ball; and our intercourse has been most insignificant, — merely that which every one shares at a ball. Perhaps he wants to disunite us, so that he may find me at some future time alone and unprotected. There, see! already you are frowning! Oh, how cordially I hate society! We were so happy without him; why take any notice of him? Jules, I entreat you, forget all this! To-morrow we shall, no doubt, hear that Monsieur de Maulincour has gone mad."

"What a singular affair!" thought Jules, as the carriage stopped under the peristyle of their house. He gave his arm to his wife and together they went up to their apartments.

To develop this history in all its truth of detail, and

to follow its course through many windings, it is necessary here to divulge some of love's secrets, to glide beneath the ceilings of a marriage chamber, not shamelessly, but like Trilby, frightening neither Dougal nor Jeannie, alarming no one,—being as chaste as our noble French language requires, and as bold as the pencil of Gérard in his picture of Daphnis and Chloe.

The bedroom of Madame Jules was a sacred spot. Herself, her husband, and her maid alone entered it. Opulence has glorious privileges, and the most enviable are those which enable the development of sentiments to their fullest extent,—fertilizing them by the accomplishment of even their caprices, and surrounding them with a brilliancy that enlarges them, with refinements that purify them, with a thousand delicacies that make them still more alluring. If you hate dinners on the grass, and meals ill-served, if you feel a pleasure in seeing a damask cloth that is dazzlingly white, a silver-gilt dinner service, and porcelain of exquisite purity, lighted by transparent candles, where miracles of cookery are served under silver covers bearing coats of arms, you must, to be consistent, leave the garrets at the tops of the houses, and the grisettes in the streets, abandon garrets, grisettes, umbrellas, and overshoes to men who pay for their dinners with tickets; and you must also comprehend Love to be a principle which develops in all its grace only on Savonnerie carpets, be-

neath the opal gleams of an alabaster lamp, between guarded walls silk-hung, before gilded hearths in chambers deadened to all outward sounds by shutters and billowy curtains. Mirrors must be there to show the play of form and repeat the woman we would multiply as love itself multiplies and magnifies her; next low divans, and a bed which, like a secret, is divined, not shown. In this coquettish chamber are fur-lined slippers for pretty feet, wax-candles under glass with muslin draperies, by which to read at all hours of the night, and flowers, not those oppressive to the head, and linen, the fineness of which might have satisfied Anne of Austria.

Madame Jules had realized this charming programme, but that was nothing. All women of taste can do as much, though there is always in the arrangement of these details a stamp of personality which gives to this decoration or that detail a character that cannot be imitated. To-day, more than ever, reigns the fanaticism of individuality. The more our laws tend to an impossible equality, the more we shall get away from it in our manners and customs. Thus, rich people are beginning, in France, to become more exclusive in their tastes and their belongings, than they have been for the last thirty years. Madame Jules knew very well how to carry out this programme; and everything about her was arranged in harmony with a luxury that

suits so well with love. Love in a cottage, or "Fifteen hundred francs and my Sophy," is the dream of starvelings to whom black bread suffices in their present state; but when love really comes, they grow fastidious and end by craving the luxuries of gastronomy. Love holds toil and poverty in horror. It would rather die than merely live on from hand to mouth.

Many women, returning from a ball, impatient for their beds, throw off their gowns, their faded flowers, their bouquets, the fragrance of which has now departed. They leave their little shoes beneath a chair, the white strings trailing; they take out their combs and let their hair roll down as it will. Little they care if their husbands see the puffs, the hairpins, the artful props which supported the elegant edifice of the hair, and the garlands or the jewels that adorned it. No more mysteries! all is over for the husband; no more painting or decoration for him. The corset — half the time it is a corset of a reparative kind — lies where it is thrown, if the maid is too sleepy to take it away with her. The whalebone bustle, the oiled-silk protections round the sleeves, the pads, the hair bought from a coiffeur, all the false woman is there, scattered about in open sight. *Disjecta membra poetæ*, the artificial poesy, so much admired by those for whom it is conceived and elaborated, the fragments of a pretty woman, litter every corner of the room. To the love of a yawn-

ing husband, the actual woman presents herself, also yawning, in a dishabille without elegance, and a tumbled night-cap, that of last night and that of to-morrow night also,—“For really, monsieur, if you want a pretty cap to rumple every night, increase my pin-money.”

There's life as it is! A woman makes herself old and unpleasing to her husband; but dainty and elegant and adorned for others, for the rival of all husbands,—for that world which calumniates and tears to shreds her sex.

Inspired by true love, for Love has, like other creations, its instinct of preservation, Madame Jules did very differently; she found in the constant blessing of her love the necessary impulse to fulfil all those minute personal cares which ought never to be relaxed, because they perpetuate love. Besides, such personal cares and duties proceed from a personal dignity which becomes all women, and are among the sweetest of flatteries, for is it not respecting in themselves the man they love?

So Madame Jules denied to her husband all access to her dressing-room, where she left the accessories of her toilet, and whence she issued mysteriously adorned for the mysterious fêtes of her heart. Entering their chamber, which was always graceful and elegant, Jules found a woman coquettishly wrapped in a charming *peignoir*,

her hair simply wound in heavy coils around her head ; a woman always more simple, more beautiful there than she was before the world ; a woman just refreshed in water, whose only artifice consisted in being whiter than her muslins, sweeter than all perfumes, more seductive than any siren, always loving and therefore always loved. This admirable understanding of a wife's business was the secret of Joséphine's charm for Napoleon, as in former times it was that of Cæsonia for Caius Caligula, of Diane de Poitiers for Henri II. If it was largely productive to women of seven or eight lustres what a weapon is it in the hands of young women ! A husband gathers with delight the rewards of his fidelity.

Returning home after the conversation which had chilled her with fear, and still gave her the keenest anxiety, Madame Jules took particular pains with her toilet for the night. She wanted to make herself, and she did make herself enchanting. She belted the cambric of her dressing-gown round her waist, defining the lines of her bust ; she allowed her hair to fall upon her beautifully modelled shoulders. A perfumed bath had given her a delightful fragrance, and her little bare feet were in velvet slippers. Strong in a sense of her advantages she came in stepping softly, and put her hands over her husband's eyes. She thought him pensive ; he was standing in his dressing-gown before

the fire, his elbow on the mantel and one foot on the fender. She said in his ear, warming it with her breath, and nibbling the tip of it with her teeth:—

“What are you thinking about, monsieur?”

Then she pressed him in her arms as if to tear him away from all evil thoughts. The woman who loves has a full knowledge of her power; the more virtuous she is, the more effectual is her coquetry.

“About you,” he answered.

“Only about me?”

“Yes.”

“Ah! that’s a very doubtful ‘yes.’”

They went to bed. As she fell asleep, Madame Jules said to herself:—

“Monsieur de Maulincour will certainly cause some evil. Jules’ mind is preoccupied, disturbed; he is nursing thoughts he does not tell me.”

It was three in the morning when Madame Jules was awakened by a presentiment which struck her heart as she slept. She had a sense both physical and moral of her husband’s absence. She did not feel the arm Jules passed beneath her head,—that arm in which she had slept, peaceful and happy, for five years; an arm she had never wearied. A voice said to her, “Jules suffers, Jules is weeping.” She raised her head, and then sat up; felt that her husband’s place was cold, and saw him sitting before

the fire, his feet on the fender, his head resting against the back of an arm-chair. Tears were on his cheeks. The poor woman threw herself hastily from her bed and sprang at a bound to her husband's knees.

"Jules! what is it? Are you ill? Speak, tell me! Speak to me, if you love me!" and she poured out a hundred words expressing the deepest tenderness.

Jules knelt at her feet, kissed her hands and knees, and answered with fresh tears: —

"Dear Clémence, I am most unhappy! It is not loving to distrust the one we love. I adore you and suspect you. The words that man said to me to-night have struck to my heart; they stay there in spite of myself, and confound me. There is some mystery here. In short, and I blush to say it, your explanations do not satisfy me. My reason casts gleams into my soul which my love rejects. It is an awful combat. Could I stay there, holding your head, and suspecting thoughts within it to me unknown? Oh! I believe in you, I believe in you!" he cried, seeing her smile sadly and open her mouth as if to speak. "Say nothing; do not reproach me. A word of blame from you would kill me. Besides, could you say anything I have not said to myself for the last three hours? Yes, for three hours, I have been here, watching you as you slept, so beautiful! admiring that pure, peace-

ful brow. Yes, yes ! you have always told me your thoughts, have you not ? I alone am in that soul. While I look at you, while my eyes can plunge into yours I see all plainly. Your life is as pure as your glance is clear. No, there is no secret behind those transparent eyes." He rose and kissed their lids. "Let me avow to you, dearest soul," he said, "that for the last five years each day has increased my happiness, through the knowledge that you are all mine, and that no natural affection even can take any of your love. Having no sister, no father, no mother, no companion, I am neither above nor below any living being in your heart ; I am alone there. Clémence, repeat to me those sweet things of the spirit you have so often said to me ; do not blame me ; comfort me, I am so unhappy. I have an odious suspicion on my conscience, and you have nothing in your heart to seal it. My beloved, tell me, could I stay there beside you ? Could two heads united as ours have been lie on the same pillow when one was suffering and the other tranquil ? What are you thinking of ?" he cried abruptly, observing that Clémence was anxious, confused, and seemed unable to restrain her tears.

"I am thinking of my mother," she answered, in a grave voice. "You will never know, Jules, what I suffer in remembering my mother's dying farewell, said in a voice sweeter than all music, and in feeling the

solemn touch of her icy hand at a moment when you overwhelm me with those assurances of your precious love."

She raised her husband, strained him to her with a nervous force greater than that of men, and kissed his hair, covering it with tears.

"Ah! I would be hacked in pieces for you! Tell me that I make you happy; that I am to you the most beautiful of women—a thousand women to you. Oh! you are loved as no other man ever was or will be. I don't know the meaning of those words 'duty,' 'virtue.' Jules, I love you for yourself; I am happy in loving you; I shall love you more and more to my dying day. I have pride in my love; I feel it is my destiny to have one sole emotion in my life. What I shall tell you now is dreadful, I know—but I am glad to have no child; I do not wish for any. I feel I am more wife than mother. Well, then, can you fear? Listen to me, my own beloved, promise to forget, not this hour of mingled tenderness and doubt, but the words of that madman. Jules, you *must*. Promise me not to see him, not to go to him. I have a deep conviction that if you set one foot into that maze we shall both roll down a precipice where I shall perish—but with your name upon my lips, your heart in my heart. Why hold me so high in that heart and yet so low in reality? What! you who give credit to so many as to money, can you not give me the charity of faith? And on the first occasion in our lives

when you might prove to me your boundless trust, do you cast me from my throne in your heart? Between a madman and me, it is the madman whom you choose to believe? oh, Jules!" She stopped, threw back the hair that fell about her brow and neck, and then, in a heart-rending tone, she added: "I have said too much; one word should suffice. If your soul and your forehead still keep this cloud, however light it be, I tell you now that I shall die of it."

She could not repress a shudder, and turned pale.

"Oh! I will kill that man," thought Jules, as he lifted his wife in his arms and carried her to her bed.

"Let us sleep in peace, my angel," he said. "I have forgotten all, I swear it!"

Clémence fell asleep to the music of those sweet words, softly repeated. Jules, as he watched her sleeping, said in his heart:—

"She is right; when love is so pure, suspicion blights it. To that young soul, that tender flower, a blight—yes, a blight means death."

When a cloud comes between two beings filled with affection for each other and whose lives are in absolute unison, that cloud, though it may disperse, leaves in these souls a trace of its passage. Either love gains a stronger life, as the earth after rain, or the shock still echoes like distant thunder through a cloudless sky. It is impossible to recover absolutely the former life; love will either increase or diminish.

At breakfast, Monsieur and Madame Jules showed to each other those particular attentions in which there is always something of affectation. There were glances of forced gayety, which seemed the effort of persons endeavoring to deceive themselves. Jules had involuntary doubts, his wife had positive fears. Still, sure of each other, they had slept. Was this strained condition the effect of a want of faith, or was it only a memory of their nocturnal scene? They did not know themselves. But they loved each other so purely that the impression of that scene, both cruel and beneficent, could not fail to leave its traces in their souls; both were eager to make those traces disappear, each striving to be the first to return to the other, and thus they could not fail to think of the cause of their first variance. To loving souls, this is not grief; pain is still far-off; but it is a sort of mourning, which is difficult to depict. If there are, indeed, relations between colors and the emotions of the soul, if, as Locke's blind man said, scarlet produces on the sight the effect produced on the hearing by a blast of trumpets, it is permissible to compare this reaction of melancholy to mourning tones of gray.

But even so, love saddened, love in which remains a true sentiment of its happiness, momentarily troubled though it be, gives enjoyments derived from pain and pleasure both, which are all novel. Jules studied his

wife's voice ; he watched her glances with the freshness of feeling that inspired him in the earliest days of his passion for her. The memory of five absolutely happy years, her beauty, the candor of her love, quickly effaced in her husband's mind the last vestiges of an intolerable pain.

The day was Sunday,—a day on which there was no Bourse and no business to be done. The reunited pair passed the whole day together, getting farther into each other's hearts than they ever yet had done, like two children who in a moment of fear, hold each other closely and cling together, united by an instinct. There are in this life of two-in-one completely happy days, the gift of chance, ephemeral flowers, born neither of yesterday nor belonging to the morrow. Jules and Clémence now enjoyed this day as though they foreboded it to be the last of their loving life. What name shall we give to that mysterious power which hastens the steps of travellers before the storm is visible ; which makes the life and beauty of the dying so resplendent, and fills the parting soul with joyous projects for days before death comes ; which tells the midnight student to fill his lamp when it shines brightest ; and makes the mother fear the thoughtful look cast upon her infant by an observing man ? We all are affected by this influence in the great catastrophes of life ; but it has never yet been named or stud-

ied ; it is something more than presentiment, but not as yet clear vision.

All went well till the following day. On Monday, Jules Desmarests, obliged to go to the Bourse on his usual business, asked his wife, as usual, if she would take advantage of his carriage and let him drive her anywhere.

" No," she said, " the day is too unpleasant to go out."

It was raining in torrents. At half-past two o'clock Monsieur Desmarests reached the Treasury. At four o'clock, as he left the Bourse, he came face to face with Monsieur de Maulincour, who was waiting for him with the nervous pertinacity of hatred and vengeance.

" Monsieur," he said, taking Monsieur Desmarests by the arm, " I have important information to give you. Listen to me. I am too loyal a man to have recourse to anonymous letters with which to trouble your peace of mind ; I prefer to speak to you in person. Believe me, if my very life were not concerned, I should not meddle with the private affairs of any household, even if I thought I had the right to do so."

" If what you have to say to me concerns Madame Desmarests," replied Jules, " I request you to be silent, monsieur."

" If I am silent, monsieur, you may before long see Madame Jules on the prisoner's bench at the court of

assizes beside a convict. Now, do you wish me to be silent?"

Jules turned pale; but his noble face instantly resumed its calmness, though it was now a false calmness. Drawing the baron under one of the temporary sheds of the Bourse, near which they were standing, he said to him in a voice which concealed his intense inward emotion:—

"Monsieur, I will listen to you; but there will be a duel to the death between us if—"

"Oh, to that I consent!" cried Monsieur de Maulincour. "I have the greatest esteem for your character. You speak of death. You are unaware that your wife may have assisted in poisoning me last Saturday night. Yes, monsieur, since then some extraordinary evil has developed in me. My hair appears to distil an inward fever and a deadly languor through my skull; I know who clutched my hair at that ball."

Monsieur de Maulincour then related, without omitting a single fact, his platonic love for Madame Jules, and the details of the affair in the rue Soly which began this narrative. Any one would have listened to him with attention; but Madame Jules' husband had good reason to be more amazed than any other human being. Here his character displayed itself; he was more amazed than overcome. Made a judge, and the judge of an adored woman, he found in his soul the

equity of a judge as well as the inflexibility. A lover still, he thought less of his own shattered life than of his wife's life ; he listened, not to his own anguish, but to some far-off voice that cried to him, " Clémence cannot lie ! Why should she betray you ? "

" Monsieur," said the baron, as he ended, " being absolutely certain of having recognized in Monsieur de Funcal the same Ferragus whom the police declared dead, I have put upon his traces an intelligent man. As I returned that night I remembered, by a fortunate chance, the name of Madame Meynardie, mentioned in that letter of Ida, the presumed mistress of my persecutor. Supplied with this clue, my emissary will soon get to the bottom of this horrible affair ; for he is far more able to discover the truth than the police themselves."

" Monsieur," replied Desmaretz, " I know not how to thank you for this confidence. You say that you can obtain proofs and witnesses ; I shall await them. I shall seek the truth of this strange affair courageously ; but you must permit me to doubt everything until the evidence of the facts you state is proved to me. In any case you shall have satisfaction, for, as you will certainly understand, we both require it."

Jules returned home.

" What is the matter, Jules ? " asked his wife, when she saw him. " You look so pale you frighten me ! "

“The day is cold,” he answered, walking with slow steps across the room where all things spoke to him of love and happiness,—that room so calm and peaceful where a deadly storm was gathering.

“Did you go out to-day?” he asked, as though mechanically.

He was impelled to ask the question by the last of a myriad of thoughts which had gathered themselves together into a lucid meditation, though jealousy was actively prompting them.

“No,” she answered, in a tone that was falsely candid.

At that instant Jules saw through the open door of the dressing-room the velvet bonnet which his wife wore in the mornings; on it were drops of rain. Jules was a passionate man, but he was also full of delicacy. It was repugnant to him to bring his wife face to face with a lie. When such a situation occurs, all has come to an end forever between certain beings. And yet those drops of rain were like a flash tearing through his brain.

He left the room, went down to the porter’s lodge, and said to the porter, after making sure that they were alone:—

“Fouguereau, a hundred crowns if you tell me the truth; dismissal if you deceive me; and nothing at all if you ever speak of my question and your answer.”

He stopped to examine the man's face, leading him under the window. Then he continued :—

“ Did madame go out this morning ? ”

“ Madame went out at a quarter to three, and I think I saw her come in about half an hour ago.”

“ That is true, upon your honor ? ”

“ Yes, monsieur.”

“ You will have the money ; but if you speak of this, remember, you will lose all.”

Jules returned to his wife.

“ Clémence,” he said, “ I find I must put my accounts in order. Do not be offended at the inquiry I am going to make. Have I not given you forty thousand francs since the beginning of the year ? ”

“ More,” she said, — “ forty-seven.”

“ Have you spent them ? ”

“ Nearly,” she replied. “ In the first place, I had to pay several of our last year's bills — ”

“ I shall never find out anything in this way,” thought Jules. “ I am not taking the best course.”

At this moment Jules' own valet entered the room with a letter for his master, who opened it indifferently, but as soon as his eyes had lighted on the signature he read it eagerly. The letter was as follows :—

MONSIEUR,—For the sake of your peace of mind as well as ours, I take the course of writing you this letter without possessing the advantage of being known to you ; but my

position, my age, and the fear of some misfortune compel me to entreat you to show indulgence in the trying circumstances under which our afflicted family is placed. Monsieur Auguste de Maulincour has for the last few days shown signs of mental derangement, and we fear that he may trouble your happiness by fancies which he confided to Monsieur le Vidame de Pamier's and myself during his first attack of frenzy. We think it right, therefore, to warn you of his malady, which is, we hope, curable; but it will have such serious and important effects on the honor of our family and the career of my grandson that we must rely, monsieur, on your entire discretion.

If Mousieur le Vidame or I could have gone to see you we would not have written. But I make no doubt that you will regard the prayer of a mother, who begs you to destroy this letter.

Accept the assurance of my perfect consideration.

BARONNE DE MAULINCOUR, *née DE RIEUX.*

“ Oh ! what torture ! ” cried Jules.

“ What is it ? what is in your mind ? ” asked his wife, exhibiting the deepest anxiety.

“ I have come,” he answered, slowly, as he threw her the letter, “ to ask myself whether it can be you who have sent me that to avert my suspicions. Judge, therefore, what I suffer.”

“ Unhappy man ! ” said Madame Jules, letting fall the paper. “ I pity him ; though he has done me great harm.”

“ Are you aware that he has spoken to me ? ”

"Oh! have you been to see him, in spite of your promise?" she cried in terror.

"Clémence, our love is in danger of perishing; we stand outside of the ordinary rules of life; let us lay aside all petty considerations in presence of this great peril. Explain to me why you went out this morning. Women think they have the right to tell us little falsehoods. Sometimes they like to hide a pleasure they are preparing for us. Just now you said a word to me, by mistake no doubt, a no for a yes."

He went into the dressing-room and brought out the bonnet.

"See," he said, "your bonnet betrayed you; these spots are raindrops. You must, therefore, have gone out in a street cab, and these drops fell upon it as you went to find one, or as you entered or left the house where you went. But a woman can leave her own home for many innocent purposes, even after she has told her husband that she did not mean to go out. There are so many reasons for changing our plans! Caprices, whims, are they not your right? Women are not required to be consistent with themselves. You had forgotten something,—a service to render, a visit, some kind action. But nothing hinders a woman from telling her husband what she does. Can we ever blush on the breast of a friend? It is not a jealous husband who speaks to you, my Clémence; it is your lover,

your friend, your brother." He flung himself passionately at her feet. " Speak, not to justify yourself, but to calm my horrible sufferings. I know that you went out. Well — what did you do? where did you go?"

" Yes, I went out, Jules," she answered in a strained voice, though her face was calm. " But ask me nothing more. Wait; have confidence; without which you will lay up for yourself terrible remorse. Jules, my Jules, trust is the virtue of love. I own to you that I am at this moment too troubled to answer you: but I am not a false woman; I love you, and you know it."

" In the midst of all that can shake the faith of man and rouse his jealousy, for I see I am not first in your heart, I am no longer thine own self — well, Clémence, even so, I prefer to believe you, to believe that voice, to believe those eyes. If you deceive me, you deserve — "

" Ten thousand deaths!" she cried, interrupting him.

" I have never hidden a thought from you, but you — "

" Hush!" she said, " our happiness depends upon our mutual silence."

" Ha! I *will* know all!" he exclaimed, with sudden violence.

At that moment the cries of a woman were heard, — the yelping of a shrill little voice came from the antechamber.

" I tell you I *will* go in!" it cried. " Yes, I shall go in; I *will* see her! I shall see her!"

Jules and Clémence both ran to the salon as the door from the antechamber was violently burst open. A young woman entered hastily, followed by two servants, who said to their master:—

“ Monsieur, this person would come in in spite of us. We told her that madame was not at home. She answered that she knew very well madame had been out, but she saw her come in. She threatened to stay at the door of the house till she could speak to madame.”

“ You can go,” said Monsieur Desmaretz to the two men. “ What do you want, mademoiselle ? ” he added, turning to the strange woman.

This “ demoiselle ” was the type of a woman who is never to be met with except in Paris. She is made in Paris, like the mud, like the pavement, like the water of the Seine, such as it becomes in Paris before human industry filters it ten times ere it enters the cut-glass decanters and sparkles pure and bright from the filth it has been. She is therefore a being who is truly original. Depicted scores of times by the painter’s brush, the pencil of the caricaturist, the charcoal of the etcher, she still escapes analysis, because she cannot be caught and rendered in all her moods, like Nature, like this fantastic Paris itself. She holds to vice by one thread only, and she breaks away from it at a thousand other points of the social circumference. Be-

sides, she lets only one trait of her character be known, and that the only one which renders her blamable; her noble virtues are hidden; she prefers to glory in her naïve libertinism. Most incompletely rendered in dramas and tales where she is put upon the scene with all her poesy, she is nowhere really true but in her garret; elsewhere she is invariably calumniated or over-praised. Rich, she deteriorates; poor, she is misunderstood. She has too many vices, and too many good qualities; she is too near to pathetic asphyxiation or to a dissolute laugh; too beautiful and too hideous. She personifies Paris, to which, in the long run, she supplies the toothless portresses, washerwomen, street-sweepers, beggars, occasionally insolent countesses, admired actresses, applauded singers; she has even given, in the olden time, two quasi-queens to the monarchy. Who can grasp such a Proteus? She is all woman, less than woman, more than woman. From this vast portrait the painter of manners and morals can take but a feature here and there; the *ensemble* is infinite.

She was a grisette of Paris; a grisette in all her glory; a grisette in a hackney-coach,—happy, young, handsome, fresh, but a grisette; a grisette with claws, scissors, impudent as a Spanish woman, snarling as a prudish English woman proclaiming her conjugal rights, coquettish as a great lady, though more frank, and

ready for everything ; a perfect *lionne* in her way ; issuing from the little apartment of which she had dreamed so often, with its red-calico curtains, its Utrecht velvet furniture, its tea-table, the cabinet of china with painted designs, the sofa, the little moquette carpet, the alabaster clock and candlesticks (under glass cases), the yellow bedroom, the eider-down quilt, — in short, all the domestic joys of a grisette's life ; and in addition, the woman-of-all-work (a former grisette herself, now the owner of a moustache), theatre-parties, unlimited bonbons, silk dresses, bonnets to spoil,—in fact, all the felicities coveted by the grisette heart except a carriage, which only enters her imagination as a marshal's bâton into the dreams of a soldier. Yes, this grisette had all these things in return for a true affection, or in spite of a true affection, as some others obtain it for an hour a day,—a sort of tax carelessly paid under the claws of an old man.

The young woman who now entered the presence of Monsieur and Madame Jules had a pair of feet so little covered by her shoes that only a slim black line was visible between the carpet and her white stockings. This peculiar foot-gear, which Parisian caricaturists have well rendered, is a special attribute of the grisette of Paris ; but she is even more distinctive to the eyes of an observer by the care with which her garments are made to adhere to her form, which they clearly define.

On this occasion she was trigly dressed in a green gown, with a white chemisette, which allowed the beauty of her bust to be seen; her shawl, of Ternaux cashmere, had fallen from her shoulders, and was held by its two corners, which were twisted round her wrists. She had a delicate face, rosy cheeks, a white skin, sparkling gray eyes, a round, very prominent forehead, hair carefully smoothed beneath her little bonnet, and heavy curls upon her neck.

“ My name is Ida,” she began, “ and if that’s Madame Jules to whom I have the advantage of speaking, I’ve come to tell her all I have in my heart against her. It is very wrong, when a woman is set up and in her furniture, as you are here, to come and take from a poor girl a man with whom I’m as good as married, morally, and who did talk of making it right by marrying me before the municipality. There’s plenty of handsome young men in the world — ain’t there, monsieur? — to take your fancy, without going after a man of middle age, who makes my happiness. Yah! I have n’t got a fine hôtel like this, but I’ve got my love, I have. I hate handsome men and money; I’m all heart, and — ”

Madame Jules turned to her husband.

“ You will allow me, monsieur, to hear no more of all this,” she said, retreating to her bedroom.

“ If the lady lives with you, I’ve made a mess of

it; but I can't help that," resumed Ida. "Why does she come after Monsieur Ferragus every day?"

"You are mistaken, mademoiselle," said Jules, stupefied; "my wife is incapable—"

"Ha! so you're married, you two," said the grisette showing some surprise. "Then it's very wrong, monsieur,—is n't it?—for a woman who has the happiness of being married in legal marriage to have relations with a man like Henri—"

"Henri! who is Henri?" said Jules, taking Ida by the arm and pulling her into an adjoining room that his wife might hear no more.

"Why, Monsieur Ferragus."

"But he is dead," said Jules.

"Nonsense; I went to Franconi's with him last night, and he brought me home—as he ought. Besides, your wife can tell you about him; did n't she go there this very afternoon at three o'clock? I know she did, for I waited in the street, and saw her,—all because that good-natured fellow, Monsieur Justin, whom you know perhaps,—a little old man with jewellery who wears corsets,—told me that Madame Jules was my rival. That name, monsieur, sounds mighty like a feigned one; but if it is yours, excuse me. But this I say, if Madame Jules was a court duchess, Henri is rich enough to satisfy all her fancies, and it is my business to protect my property; I've a right to, for

I love him, that I do. He is my *first* inclination ; my happiness and all my future fate depends on it. I fear nothing, monsieur ; I am honest ; I never lied, or stole the property of any living soul, no matter who. If an empress was my rival, I'd go straight to her, empress as she was ; because all pretty women are equals, monsieur — ”

“ Enough ! enough ! ” said Jules. “ Where do you live ? ”

“ Rue de la Corderie-du-Temple, number 14, monsieur,— Ida Gruget, corset-maker, at your service,— for we make lots of corsets for men.”

“ Where does the man whom you call Ferragus live ? ”

“ Monsieur,” she said, pursing up her lips, “ in the first place, he's not a man ; he is a rich monsieur, much richer, perhaps, than you are. But why do you ask me his address when your wife knows it ? He told me not to give it. Am I obliged to answer you ? I'm not, thank God, in a confessional or a police-court ; I'm responsible only to myself.”

“ If I were to offer you ten thousand francs to tell me where Monsieur Ferragus lives, how then ? ”

“ Ha ! n, o, no, my little friend, and that ends the matter,” she said, emphasizing this singular reply with a popular gesture. “ There's no sum in the world could make me tell you. I have the honor to bid you good-day. How do I get out of here ? ”

"Jules, horror-struck, allowed her to go without further notice. The whole world seemed to crumble beneath his feet, and above him the heavens were falling with a crash.

"Monsieur is served," said his valet.

The valet and the footman waited in the dining-room a quarter of an hour without seeing master or mistress.

"Madame will not dine to-day," said the waiting-maid, coming in.

"What's the matter, Joséphine?" asked the valet.

"I don't know," she answered. "Madame is crying, and is going to bed. Monsieur has no doubt got some love-affair on hand, and it has been discovered at a very bad time. I would n't answer for madame's life. Men are so clumsy; they 'll make you scenes without any precaution."

"That's not so," said the valet, in a low voice. "On the contrary, madame is the one who — you understand? What time does monsieur have to go after pleasures, he, who has n't slept out of madame's room for five years, who goes to his study at ten and never leaves it till breakfast, at twelve. His life is all known, it is regular; whereas madame goes out nearly every day at three o'clock, Heaven knows where."

"And monsieur too," said the maid, taking her mistress's part.

"Yes, but he goes straight to the Bourse. I told

him three times that dinner was ready," continued the valet, after a pause. " You might as well talk to a post."

Monsieur Jules entered the dining-room.

" Where is madame?" he said.

" Madame is going to bed; her head aches," replied the maid, assuming an air of importance.

Monsieur Jules then said to the footmen composedly: " You can take away; I shall go and sit with madame."

He went to his wife's room and found her weeping, but endeavoring to smother her sobs with her handkerchief.

" Why do you weep?" said Jules; " you need expect no violence and no reproaches from me. Why should I avenge myself? If you have not been faithful to my love, it is that you were never worthy of it."

" Not worthy?" The words were repeated amid her sobs and the accent in which they were said would have moved any other man than Jules.

" To kill you, I must love more than perhaps I do love you," he continued. " But I should never have the courage; I would rather kill myself, leaving you to your — happiness, and with — whom! — "

He did not end his sentence.

" Kill yourself!" she cried, flinging herself at his feet and clasping them.

But he, wishing to escape the embrace, tried to shake her off, dragging her in so doing toward the bed.

"Let me alone," he said.

"No, no, Jules!" she cried. "If you love me no longer I shall die. Do you wish to know all?"

"Yes."

He took her, grasped her violently, and sat down on the edge of the bed, holding her between his legs. Then, looking at that beautiful face now red as fire and furrowed with tears,—

"Speak," he said.

Her sobs began again.

"No; it is a secret of life and death. If I tell it, I— No, I cannot. Have mercy, Jules!"

"You have betrayed me—"

"Ah! Jules, you think so now, but soon you will know all."

"But this Ferragus, this convict whom you go to see, a man enriched by crime, if he does not belong to you, if you do not belong to him—"

"Oh, Jules!"

"Speak! Is he your mysterious benefactor? — the man to whom we owe our fortune, as persons have said already?"

"Who said that?"

"A man whom I killed in a duel."

"Oh, God! one death already!"

"If he is not your protector, if he does not give you money, if it is you, on the contrary, who carry money to him, tell me, is he your brother?"

"What if he were?" she said.

Monsieur Desmarests crossed his arms.

"Why should that have been concealed from me?" he said. "Then you and your mother have both deceived me? Besides, does a woman go to see her brother every day, or nearly every day?"

His wife had fainted at his feet.

"Dead," he said. "And suppose I am mistaken?"

He sprang to the bell-rope; called Joséphine, and lifted Clémence to the bed.

"I shall die of this," said Madame Jules, recovering consciousness.

"Joséphine," cried Monsieur Desmarests. "Send for Monsieur Desplein; send also to my brother and ask him to come here immediately."

"Why your brother?" asked Clémence.

But Jules had already left the room.

IV.

WHERE GO TO DIE?

FOR the first time in five years Madame Jules slept alone in her bed, and was compelled to admit a physician into that sacred chamber. These in themselves were two keen pangs. Desplein found Madame Jules very ill. Never was a violent emotion more untimely. He would say nothing definite, and postponed till the morrow giving any opinion, after leaving a few directions, which were not executed, the emotions of the heart causing all bodily cares to be forgotten.

When morning dawned, Clémence had not yet slept. Her mind was absorbed in the low murmur of a conversation which lasted several hours between the brothers ; but the thickness of the walls allowed no word which could betray the object of this long conference to reach her ears. Monsieur Desmarests, the notary, went away at last. The stillness of the night, and the singular activity of the senses given by powerful emotion, enabled Clémence to distinguish the scratching of a pen and the involuntary movements of a person engaged in writing. Those who are habitually up at night, and who observe the different acoustic effects produced in

absolute silence, know that a slight echo can be readily perceived in the very places where louder but more equable and continued murmurs are not distinct. At four o'clock the sound ceased. Clémence rose, anxious and trembling. Then, with bare feet and without a wrapper, forgetting her illness and her moist condition, the poor woman opened the door softly without noise and looked into the next room. She saw her husband sitting, with a pen in his hand, asleep in his arm-chair. The candles had burned to the sockets. She slowly advanced and read on an envelope, already sealed, the words, "This is my will."

She knelt down as if before an open grave and kissed her husband's hand. He woke instantly.

"Jules, my friend, they grant some days to criminals condemned to death," she said, looking at him with eyes that blazed with fever and with love. "Your innocent wife asks only two. Leave me free for two days, and — wait! After that, I shall die happy — at least, you will regret me."

"Clémence, I grant them."

Then, as she kissed her husband's hands in the tender transport of her heart, Jules, under the spell of that cry of innocence, took her in his arms and kissed her forehead, though ashamed to feel himself still under subjection to the power of that noble beauty.

On the morrow, after taking a few hours' rest, Jules

entered his wife's room, obeying mechanically his invariable custom of not leaving the house without a word to her. Clémence was sleeping. A ray of light passing through a chink in the upper blind of a window fell across the face of the dejected woman. Already suffering had impaired her forehead and the fresh redness of her lips. A lover's eye could not fail to notice the appearance of dark blotches, and a sickly pallor in place of the uniform tone of the cheeks and the pure ivory whiteness of the skin,—two points at which the sentiments of her noble soul were artlessly wont to show themselves.

“She suffers,” thought Jules. “Poor Clémence! May God protect us!”

He kissed her very softly on the forehead. She woke, saw her husband, and remembered all. Unable to speak, she took his hand, her eyes filling with tears.

“I am innocent,” she said, ending her dream.

“You will not go out to-day, will you?” asked Jules.

“No, I feel too weak to leave my bed.”

“If you should change your mind, wait till I return,” said Jules.

Then he went down to the porter's lodge.

“Fouguereau, you will watch the door yourself to-day. I wish to know exactly who comes to the house, and who leaves it.”

Then he threw himself into a hackney-coach, and was driven to the hôtel de Maulincour, where he asked for the baron.

“ Monsieur is ill,” they told him.

Jules insisted on entering, and gave his name. If he could not see the baron, he wished to see the vidame or the dowager. He waited some time in the salon, where Madame de Maulincour finally came to him and told him that her grandson was much too ill to receive him.

“ I know, madame, the nature of his illness from the letter you did me the honor to write, and I beg you to believe — ”

“ A letter to you, monsieur, written by me ! ” cried the dowager, interrupting him. “ I have written you no letter. What was I made to say in that letter, monsieur ? ”

“ Madame,” replied Jules, “ intending to see Monsieur de Maulincour to-day, I thought it best to preserve the letter in spite of its injunction to destroy it. There it is.”

Madame de Maulincour put on her spectacles, and the moment she cast her eyes on the paper she showed the utmost surprise.

“ Monsieur,” she said, “ my writing is so perfectly imitated that, if the matter were not so recent, I might be deceived myself. My grandson is ill, it is true ; but

his reason has never for a moment been affected. We are the puppets of some evil-minded person or persons ; and yet I cannot imagine the object of a trick like this. You shall see my grandson, monsieur, and you will at once perceive that he is perfectly sound in mind."

She rang the bell, and sent to ask if the baron felt able to receive Monsieur Desmarests. The servant returned with an affirmative answer. Jules went to the baron's room, where he found him in an arm-chair near the fire. Too feeble to move, the unfortunate man merely bowed his head with a melancholy gesture. The Vidame de Pamiers was sitting with him.

"Monsieur le baron," said Jules, "I have something to say which makes it desirable that I should see you alone."

"Monsieur," replied Auguste, "Monsieur le vidame knows about this affair ; you can speak fearlessly before him."

"Monsieur le baron," said Jules, in a grave voice, "you have troubled and well-nigh destroyed my happiness without having any right to do so. Until the moment when we can see clearly which of us should demand, or grant, reparation to the other, you are bound to help me in following the dark and mysterious path into which you have flung me. I have now come to ascertain from you the present residence of the extraordinary being who exercises such a baneful effect

on your life and mine. On my return home yesterday, after listening to your avowals, I received that letter."

Jules gave him the forged letter.

"This Ferragus, this Bourignard, or this Monsieur de Funcal, is a demon!" cried Maulincour, after having read it. "Oh, what a frightful maze I put my foot into when I meddled in this matter! Where am I going? I did wrong, monsieur," he continued, looking at Jules; "but death is the greatest of all expiations, and my death is now approaching. You can ask me whatever you like; I am at your orders."

"Monsieur, you know, of course, where this man is living, and I must know it if it costs me all my fortune to penetrate this mystery. In presence of so cruel an enemy every moment is precious."

"Justin shall tell you all," replied the baron.

At these words the vidame fidgeted on his chair. Auguste rang the bell.

"Justin is not in the house!" cried the vidame, in a hasty manner that told much.

"Well, then," said Auguste, excitedly, "the other servants must know where he is; send a man on horseback to fetch him. Your valet is in Paris, is n't he? He can be found."

The vidame was visibly distressed.

"Justin can't come, my dear boy," said the old man;

"he is dead. I wanted to conceal the accident from you, but — "

"Dead!" cried Monsieur de Maulincour, — "dead! When and how?"

"Last night. He had been supping with some old friends, and, I dare say, was drunk; his friends — no doubt they were drunk, too — left him lying in the street, and a heavy vehicle ran over him."

"The convict did not miss *him*; at the first stroke he killed," said Auguste. "He has had less luck with me; it has taken four blows to put me out of the way."

Jules was gloomy and thoughtful.

"Am I to know nothing, then?" he cried, after a long pause. "Your valet seems to have been justly punished. Did he not exceed your orders in calumniating Madame Desmarests to a person named Ida, whose jealousy he roused in order to turn her vindictiveness upon us."

"Ah, monsieur! in my anger I informed him about Madame Jules," said Auguste.

"Monsieur!" cried the husband, keenly irritated.

"Oh, monsieur!" replied the baron, claiming silence by a gesture, "I am prepared for all. You cannot tell me anything my own conscience has not already told me. I am now expecting the most celebrated of all professors of toxicology, in order to learn my fate. If

I am destined to intolerable suffering, my resolution is taken. I shall blow my brains out."

" You talk like a child!" cried the vidame, horrified by the coolness with which the baron said these words.
" Your grandmother would die of grief."

" Then, monsieur," said Jules, " am I to understand that there exist no means of discovering in what part of Paris this extraordinary man resides?"

" I think, monsieur," said the old vidame, " from what I have heard poor Justin say, that Monsieur de Funcal lives at either the Portuguese or the Brazilian embassy. Monsieur de Funcal is a nobleman belonging to both those countries. As for the convict, he is dead and buried. Your persecutor, whoever he is, seems to me so powerful that it would be well to take no decisive measures until you are sure of some way of confounding and crushing him. Act prudently and with caution, my dear monsieur. Had Monsieur de Maulincour followed my advice, nothing of all this would have happened."

Jules coldly but politely withdrew. He was now at a total loss to know how to reach Ferragus. As he passed into his own house, the porter told him that Madame had just been out to throw a letter into the post box at the head of the rue de Ménars. Jules felt humiliated by this proof of the insight with which the porter espoused his cause, and the cleverness

by which he guessed the way to serve him. The eagerness of servants, and their shrewdness in compromising masters who compromise themselves, was known to him, and he fully appreciated the danger of having them as accomplices, no matter for what purpose. But he could not think of his personal dignity until the moment when he found himself thus suddenly degraded. What a triumph for the slave who could not raise himself to his master, to compel his master to come down to his level! Jules was harsh and hard to him. Another fault. But he suffered so deeply! His life till then so upright, so pure, was becoming crafty; he was to scheme and lie. Clémence was scheming and lying. This to him was a moment of horrible disgust. Lost in a flood of bitter feelings, Jules stood motionless at the door of his house. Yielding to despair, he thought of fleeing, of leaving France forever, carrying with him the illusions of uncertainty. Then, again, not doubting that the letter Clémence had just posted was addressed to Ferragus, his mind searched for a means of obtaining the answer that mysterious being was certain to send. Then his thoughts began to analyze the singular good fortune of his life since his marriage, and he asked himself whether the calumny for which he had taken such signal vengeance was not a truth. Finally, reverting to the coming answer, he said to himself: —

"But this man, so profoundly capable, so logical in his every act, who sees and foresees, who calculates, and even divines, our very thoughts, is he likely to make an answer? Will he not employ some other means more in keeping with his power? He may send his answer by some beggar; or in a carton brought by an honest man, who does not suspect what he brings; or in some parcel of shoes, which a shop-girl may innocently deliver to my wife. If Clémence and he have agreed upon such means — "

He distrusted all things; his mind ran over vast tracts and shoreless oceans of conjecture. Then, after floating for a time among a thousand contradictory ideas, he felt he was strongest in his own house, and he resolved to watch it as the ant-lion watches his sandy labyrinth.

"Fouguereau," he said to the porter, "I am not at home to any one who comes to see me. If any one calls to see madame, or brings her anything, ring twice. Bring all letters addressed here to me, no matter for whom they are intended."

"Thus," thought he, as he entered his study, which was in the entresol, "I forestall the schemes of this Ferragus. If he sends some one to ask for me so as to find out if Clémence is alone, at least I shall not be tricked like a fool."

He stood by the window of his study, which looked

upon the street, and then a final scheme, inspired by jealousy, came into his mind. He resolved to send his head-clerk in his own carriage to the Bourse with a letter to another broker, explaining his sales and purchases and requesting him to do his business for that day. He postponed his more delicate transactions till the morrow, indifferent to the fall or rise of stocks or the debts of all Europe. High privilege of love!—it crushes all things, all interests fall before it: altar, throne, consols!

At half-past three, just the hour at which the Bourse is in full blast of reports, monthly settlements, premiums, etc., Fouguereau entered the study, quite radiant with his news.

“ Monsieur, an old woman has come, but very cautiously; I think she’s a sly one. She asked for monsieur, and seemed much annoyed when I told her he was out; then she gave me a letter for madame, and here it is.”

Fevered with anxiety, Jules opened the letter; then he dropped into a chair exhausted. The letter was mere nonsense throughout, and needed a key. It was virtually in cipher.

“ Go away, Fouguereau.” The porter left him. “ It is a mystery deeper than the sea below the plummet line! Ah! it must be love; love only is so sagacious, so inventive as this. Ah! I shall kill her.”

At this moment an idea flashed through his brain with such force that he felt almost physically illuminated by it. In the days of his toilsome poverty before his marriage, Jules had made for himself a true friend. The extreme delicacy with which he had managed the susceptibilities of a man both poor and modest; the respect with which he had surrounded him; the ingenuous cleverness he had employed to nobly compel him to share his opulence without permitting it to make him blush, increased their friendship. Jacquet continued faithful to Desmarests in spite of his wealth.

Jacquet, a nobly upright man, a toiler, austere in his morals, had slowly made his way in that particular ministry which develops both honesty and knavery at the same time. A clerk in the ministry of Foreign Affairs, he had charge of the most delicate division of its archives. Jacquet in that office was like a glow-worm, casting his light upon those secret correspondences, deciphering and classifying despatches. Ranking higher than a mere *bourgeois*, his position at the ministry was superior to that of the other subalterns. He lived obscurely, glad to feel that such obscurity sheltered him from reverses and disappointments, and was satisfied to humbly pay in the lowest coin his debt to the country. Thanks to Jules, his position had been much ameliorated by a worthy mar-

riage. An unrecognized patriot, a minister in actual fact, he contented himself with groaning in his chimney-corner at the course of the government. In his own home, Jacquet was an easy-going king,—an umbrella-man, as they say, who hired a carriage for his wife which he never entered himself. In short, to end this sketch of a philosopher unknown to himself, he had never suspected and never in all his life would suspect the advantages he might have drawn from his position,—that of having for his intimate friend a broker, and of knowing every morning all the secrets of the State. This man, sublime after the manner of that nameless soldier who died in saving Napoleon by a “qui vive,” lived at the ministry.

In ten minutes Jules was in his friend’s office. Jacquet gave him a chair, laid aside methodically his green silk eye-shade, rubbed his hands, picked up his snuff-box, rose, stretched himself till his shoulder-blades cracked, swelled out his chest, and said :—

“ What brings you here, Monsieur Desmarests? What do you want with me?”

“ Jacquet, I want you to decipher a secret,—a secret of life and death.”

“ It does n’t concern politics?”

“ If it did, I should n’t come to you for information,” said Jules. “ No, it is a family matter, about which I require you to be absolutely silent.”

" Claude-Joseph Jacquet, dumb by profession. Don't you know me by this time?" he said, laughing. "Discretion is my lot."

Jules showed him the letter.

" You must read me this letter, addressed to my wife."

" The deuce! the deuce! a bad business!" said Jacquet, examining the letter as a usurer examines a note to be negotiated. " Ha! that's a gridiron letter! Wait a minute."

He left Jules alone for a moment, but returned immediately.

" Easy enough to read, my friend! It is written on the gridiron plan, used by the Portuguese minister under Monsieur de Choiseul, at the time of the dismissal of the Jesuits. Here, see!"

Jacquet placed upon the writing a piece of paper cut out in regular squares, like the paper laces which confectioners wrap round their sugarplums; and Jules then read with perfect ease the words that were visible in the interstices. They were as follows:—

" Don't be uneasy, my dear Clémence; our happiness cannot again be troubled; and your husband will soon lay aside his suspicions. However ill you may be, you must have the courage to come here to-morrow; find strength in your love for me. Mine for you has induced me to submit to a cruel operation, and I cannot leave my bed. I have had the actual cautery applied to my back, and it was neces-

sary to burn it in a long time; you understand me? But I thought of you, and I did not suffer.

"To baffle Maulincour (who will not persecute us much longer), I have left the protecting roof of the embassy, and am now safe from all inquiry in the rue des Enfants-Rouges, number 12, with an old woman, Madame Étienne Gruget, mother of that Ida, who shall pay dear for her folly. Come to-morrow, at nine in the morning. I am in a room which is reached only by an interior staircase. Ask for Monsieur Canuset. Adieu; I kiss your forehead, my darling."

Jacquet looked at Jules with a sort of honest terror, the sign of a true compassion, as he made his favorite exclamation in two separate and distinct tones,—

"The deuce! the deuce!"

"That seems clear to you, does n't it?" said Jules. "Well, in the depths of my heart there is a voice that pleads for my wife, and makes itself heard above the pangs of jealousy. I must endure the worst of all agony until to-morrow; but to-morrow, between nine and ten I shall know all; I shall be happy or wretched for all my life. Think of me then, Jacquet."

"I shall be at your house to-morrow at eight o'clock. We will go together; I 'll wait for you, if you like, in the street. You may run some danger, and you ought to have near you some devoted person who 'll understand a mere sign, and whom you can safely trust. Count on me."

"Even to help me in killing some one?"

"The deuce! the deuce!" said Jacquet, repeating, as it were, the same musical note. "I have two children and a wife."

Jules pressed his friend's hand and went away; but returned immediately.

"I forgot the letter," he said. "But that's not all, I must reseal it."

"The deuce! the deuce! you opened it without saving the seal; however, it is still possible to restore it. Leave it with me and I'll bring it to you *secundum scripturam.*"

"At what time?

"Half-past five."

"If I am not yet in, give it to the porter and tell him to send it up to madame."

"Do you want me to-morrow?"

"No. Adieu."

Jules drove at once to the place de la Rotonde du Temple, where he left his cabriolet and went on foot to the rue des Enfants-Rouges. He found the house of Madame Étienne Gruget and examined it. There, the mystery on which depended the fate of so many persons would be cleared up; there, at this moment, was Ferragus, and to Ferragus all the threads of this strange plot led. The Gordian knot of the drama, already so bloody, was surely in a meeting between

Madame Jules, her husband, and that man; and a blade able to cut the closest of such knots would not be wanting.

The house was one of those which belong to the class called *cabajoutis*. This significant name is given by the populace of Paris to houses which are built, as it were, piecemeal. They are nearly always composed of buildings originally separate but afterwards united according to the fancy of the various proprietors who successively enlarge them; or else they are houses begun, left unfinished, again built upon, and completed,—unfortunate structures which have passed, like certain peoples, under many dynasties of capricious masters. Neither the floors nor the windows have an *ensemble*,—to borrow one of the most picturesque terms of the art of painting; all is discord, even the external decoration. The *cabajoutis* is to Parisian architecture what the *capharnaüm* is to the apartment,—a poke-hole, where the most heterogeneous articles are flung pell-mell.

“ Madame Étienne?” asked Jules of the portress.

This portress had her lodge under the main entrance, in a sort of chicken coop, or wooden house on rollers, not unlike those sentry-boxes which the police have lately set up by the stands of hackney-coaches.

“ Hein?” said the portress, without laying down the stocking she was knitting.

In Paris the various component parts which make up the physiognomy of any given portion of the monstrous city, are admirably in keeping with its general character. Thus porter, concierge, or Suisse, whichever name may be given to that essential muscle of the Parisian monster, is always in conformity with the neighborhood of which he is a part; in fact, he is often an epitome of it. The lazy porter of the faubourg Saint-Germain, with lace on every seam of his coat, dabbles in stocks; he of the Chaussée d'Antin takes his ease, reads the money-articles in the newspapers, and has a business of his own in the faubourg Montmartre. The portress in the quarter of prostitution was formerly a prostitute; in the Marais, she has morals, is cross-grained, and full of crotchets.

On seeing Monsieur Jules this particular portress, holding her knitting in one hand, took a knife and stirred the half-extinguished peat in her foot-warmer; then she said:—

“ You want Madame Étienne; do you mean Madame Étienne Gruget?”

“ Yes,” said Jules, assuming a vexed air.

“ Who makes trimmings?”

“ Yes.”

“ Well, then, monsieur,” she said, issuing from her cage, and laying her hand on Jules’ arm and leading him to the end of a long passage-way, vaulted like a

cellar, "go up the second staircase at the end of the court-yard — where you see the windows with the pots of pinks ; that's where Madame Étienne lives."

"Thank you, madame. Do you think she is alone?"

"Why should n't she be alone? she's a widow."

Jules hastened up a dark stairway, the steps of which were knobby with hardened mud left by the feet of those who came and went. On the second floor he saw three doors but no signs of pinks. Fortunately, on one of the doors, the oiliest and darkest of the three, he read these words, chalked on a panel: "Ida will come to-night at nine o'clock."

"This is the place," thought Jules.

He pulled an old bellrope, black with age, and heard the smothered sound of a cracked bell and the barking of an asthmatic little dog. By the way the sounds echoed from the interior he knew that the rooms were encumbered with articles which left no space for reverberation,—a characteristic feature of the homes of workmen and humble households, where space and air are always lacking.

Jules looked about mechanically for the pinks, and found them on the outer sill of a sash window between two filthy drain-pipes. So here were flowers ; here, a garden, two yards long and six inches wide ; here, a wheat-ear ; here, a whole life epitomized ; but here, too, all the miseries of that life. A ray of light fall-

ing from heaven as if by special favor on those puny flowers and the vigorous wheat-ear brought out in full relief the dust, the grease, and that nameless color, peculiar to Parisian squalor, made of dirt, which crusted and spotted the damp walls, the worm-eaten balusters, the disjointed window-casings, and the door originally red. Presently the cough of an old woman, and a heavy female step, shuffling painfully in list slippers, announced the coming of the mother of Ida Gruget. The creature opened the door and came out upon the landing, looked up, and said:—

“ Ah ! is this Monsieur Bocquillon ? Why, no ? But perhaps you’re his brother. What can I do for you ? Come in, monsieur.”

Jules followed her into the first room, where he saw, huddled together, cages, household utensils, ovens, furniture, little earthenware dishes full of food or water for the dog and the cats, a wooden clock, bed-quilts, engravings of Eisen, heaps of old iron, all these things mingled and massed together in a way that produced a most grotesque effect,—a true Parisian dusthole, in which were not lacking a few old numbers of the “ Constitutionel.”

Jules, impelled by a sense of prudence, paid no attention to the widow’s invitation when she said civilly, showing him an inner room :—

“ Come in here, monsieur, and warm yourself”

Fearing to be overheard by Ferragus, Jules asked himself whether it were not wisest to conclude the arrangement he had come to make with the old woman in the crowded antechamber. A hen, which descended cackling from a loft, roused him from this inward meditation. He came to a resolution, and followed Ida's mother into the inner room, whither they were accompanied by the wheezy pug, a personage otherwise mute, who jumped upon a stool. Madame Gruget showed the assumption of semi-pauperism when she invited her visitor to warm himself. Her fire-pot contained, or rather concealed two bits of sticks, which lay apart: the grating was on the ground, its handle in the ashes. The mantel-shelf, adorned with a little wax Jesus under a shade of squares of glass held together with blue paper, was piled with wools, bobbins, and tools used in the making of gimps and trimmings. Jules examined everything in the room with a curiosity that was full of interest, and showed, in spite of himself, an inward satisfaction.

"Well, monsieur, tell me, do you want to buy any of my things?" said the old woman, seating herself in a cane arm-chair, which appeared to be her headquarters. In it she kept her handkerchief, snuffbox, knitting, half-peeled vegetables, spectacles, calendar, a bit of livery gold lace just begun, a greasy pack of cards, and two volumes of novels, all stuck into the hollow

of the back. This article of furniture, in which the old creature was floating down the river of life, was not unlike the encyclopedic bag which a woman carries with her when she travels; in which may be found a compendium of her household belongings, from the portrait of her husband to *eau de Mélisse* for faintness, sugarplums for the children, and English court-plaster in case of cuts.

Jules studied all. He looked attentively at Madame Gruget's yellow visage, at her gray eyes without either brows or lashes, her toothless mouth, her wrinkles marked in black, her rusty cap, her still more rusty ruffles, her cotton petticoat full of holes, her worn-out slippers, her disabled fire-pot, her table heaped with dishes and silks and work begun or finished, in wool or cotton, in the midst of which stood a bottle of wine. Then he said to himself: "This old woman has some passion, some strong liking or vice; I can make her do my will."

"Madame," he said aloud, with a private sign of intelligence, "I have come to order some livery trimmings." Then he lowered his voice. "I know," he continued, "that you have a lodger who has taken the name of Camuset." The old woman looked at him suddenly, but without any sign of astonishment. "Now, tell me, can we come to an understanding? This is a question which means fortune for you."

"Monsieur," she replied, "speak out, and don't be afraid. There's no one here. But if I had any one above, it would be impossible for him to hear you."

"Ha! the sly old creature, she answers like a Norman," thought Jules, "We shall agree. Do not give yourself the trouble to tell falsehoods, madame," he resumed, "In the first place, let me tell you that I mean no harm either to you or to your lodger who is suffering from cautery, or to your daughter Ida, a stay-maker, the friend of Ferragus. You see, I know all your affairs. Do not be uneasy; I am not a detective policeman, nor do I desire anything that can hurt your conscience. A young lady will come here to-morrow-morning at half-past nine o'clock, to talk with this lover of your daughter. I want to be where I can see all and hear all, without being seen or heard by them. If you will furnish me the means of doing so, I will reward that service with the gift of two thousand francs and a yearly stipend of six hundred. My notary shall prepare a deed before you this evening, and I will give him the money to hold; he will pay the two thousand to you to-morrow after the conference at which I desire to be present, as you will then have given proofs of your good faith."

"Will it injure my daughter, my good monsieur?" she asked, casting a cat-like glance of doubt and uneasiness upon him.

"In no way, madame. But, in any case, it seems to me that your daughter does not treat you well. A girl who is loved by so rich a man as Ferragus ought to make you more comfortable than you seem to be."

"Ah, my dear monsieur, just think, not so much as one poor ticket to the Ambigu, or the Gaieté, where she can go as much as she likes. It's shameful! A girl for whom I sold my silver forks and spoons! and now I eat, at my age, with German metal,—and all to pay for her apprenticeship, and give her a trade, where she could coin money if she chose. As for that, she's like me, clever as a witch; I must do her that justice. But, I will say, she might give me her old silk gowns,—I, who am so fond of wearing silk. But no! Monsieur, she dines at the Cadran-Bleu at fifty francs a head, and rolls in her carriage as if she were a princess, and despises her mother for a Colin-Lampon. Heavens and earth! what heedless young ones we've brought into the world; we have nothing to boast of there. A mother, monsieur, can't be anything else but a good mother; and I've concealed that girl's ways, and kept her in my bosom, to take the bread out of my mouth and cram everything into her own. Well, well! and now she comes and fondles one a little, and says, 'How d'ye do, mother?' And that's all the duty she thinks of paying. But she'll have children one of these days, and then she'll find out what

it is to have such baggage,— which one can't help loving all the same."

"Do you mean that she does nothing for you?"

"Ah, nothing? No, monsieur, I did n't say that; if she did nothing, that would be a little too much. She gives me my rent and thirty-six francs a month. But, monsieur, at my age,— and I'm fifty-two years old, with eyes that feel the strain at night,— ought I to be working in this way? Besides, why won't she have me to live with her? I should shame her, should I? Then let her say so. Faith, one ought to be buried out of the way of such dogs of children, who forget you before they've even shut the door."

She pulled her handkerchief from her pocket, and with it a lottery ticket that dropped on the floor; but she hastily picked it up, saying, "Hi! that's the receipt for my taxes."

Jules at once perceived the reason of the sagacious parsimony of which the mother complained; and he was the more certain that the widow Gruget would agree to the proposed bargain.

"Well, then, madame," he said, "accept what I offer you."

"Did you say two thousand francs in ready money, and six hundred annuity, monsieur?"

"Madame, I've changed my mind; I will promise you only three hundred annuity. This way seems

more to my own interests. But I will give you five thousand francs in ready money. Would n't you like that as well?"

"Bless me, yes, monsieur!"

"You 'll get more comfort out of it; and you can go to the Ambigu and Franconi's at your ease in a coach."

"As for Franconi, I don't like that, for they don't talk there. Monsieur, if I accept, it is because it will be very advantageous for my child. I sha n't be a drag on her any longer. Poor little thing! I 'm glad she has her pleasures, after all. Ah, monsieur, youth must be amused! And so, if you assure me that no harm will come to anybody —"

"Not to anybody," repeated Jules. "But now, how will you manage it?"

"Well, monsieur, if I give Monsieur Ferragus a little tea made of poppy-heads to-night, he 'll sleep sound, the dear man; and he needs it, too, because of his sufferings, for he does suffer, I can tell you, and more 's the pity. But I 'd like to know what a healthy man like him wants to burn his back for, just to get rid of a tic douleureux which troubles him once in two years. However, to come back to our business. I have my neighbor's key; her lodging is just above mine, and in it there 's a room adjoining the one where Monsieur Ferragus is, with only a partition between

them. My neighbor is away in the country for ten days. Therefore, if I make a hole to-night while Monsieur Ferragus is sound asleep, you can see and hear them to-morrow at your ease. I'm on good terms with a locksmith,— a very friendly man, who talks like an angel, and he'll do the work for me and say nothing about it."

"Then here's a hundred francs for him. Come to-night to Monsieur Desmaret's office; he's a notary, and here's his address. At nine o'clock the deed will be ready, but — silence!"

"Enough, monsieur; as you say — silence! Au revoir, monsieur."

Jules went home, almost calmed by the certainty that he should know the truth on the morrow. As he entered the house, the porter gave him the letter properly resealed.

"How do you feel now?" he said to his wife, in spite of the coldness that separated them.

"Pretty well, Jules," she answered in a coaxing voice, "do come and dine beside me."

"Very good," he said, giving her the letter. "Here is something Fouguereau gave me for you."

Clémence, who was very pale, colored high when she saw the letter, and that sudden redness was a fresh blow to her husband.

"Is that joy," he said, laughing, "or the effect of expectation?"

"Oh, of many things!" she said, examining the seal.

"I leave you now for a few moments."

He went down to his study, and wrote to his brother, giving him directions about the payment to the widow Gruget. When he returned, he found his dinner served on a little table by his wife's bedside, and Joséphine ready to wait on him.

"If I were up how I should like to serve you myself," said Clémence, when Joséphine had left them. "Oh, yes, on my knees!" she added, passing her white hands through her husband's hair. "Dear, noble heart, you were very kind and gracious to me just now. You did me more good by showing me such confidence than all the doctors on earth could do me with their prescriptions. That feminine delicacy of yours — for you do know how to love like a woman — well, it has shed a balm into my heart which has almost cured me. There's truce between us, Jules; lower your head, that I may kiss it."

Jules could not deny himself the pleasure of that embrace. But it was not without a feeling of remorse in his heart; he felt himself small before this woman whom he was still tempted to think innocent. A sort of melancholy joy possessed him. A tender hope shone on her features in spite of their grieved expression. They both were equally unhappy in deceiving each

other; another caress, and, unable to resist their suffering, all would then have been avowed.

"To-morrow evening, Clémence."

"No, no; to-morrow morning, by twelve o'clock, you will know all, and you'll kneel down before your wife — Oh, no! you shall not be humiliated; you are all forgiven now; you have done no wrong. Listen, Jules; yesterday you did crush me — harshly; but perhaps my life would not have been complete without that agony; it may be a shadow that will make our coming days celestial."

"You lay a spell upon me," cried Jules; "you fill me with remorse."

"Poor love! destiny is stronger than we, and I am not the accomplice of mine. I shall go out to-morrow."

"At what hour?" asked Jules.

"At half-past nine."

"Clémence," he said, "take every precaution; consult Doctor Desplein and old Haudry."

"I shall consult nothing but my heart and my courage."

"I shall leave you free; you will not see me till twelve o'clock."

"Won't you keep me company this evening? I feel so much better."

After attending to some business, Jules returned to his wife, — recalled by her invincible attraction. His passion was stronger than his anguish.

The next day, at nine o'clock Jules left home, hurried to the rue des Enfants-Rouges, went upstairs, and rang the bell of the widow Gruget's lodgings.

"Ah! you've kept your word, as true as the dawn. Come in, monsieur," said the old woman when she saw him. "I've made you a cup of coffee with cream," she added, when the door was closed. "Oh! real cream; I saw it milked myself at the dairy we have in this very street."

"Thank you, no, madame, nothing. Take me at once —"

"Very good, monsieur. Follow me, this way."

She led him up into the room above her own, where she showed him, triumphantly, an opening about the size of a two-franc piece, made during the night, in a place, which, in each room, was above a wardrobe. In order to look through it, Jules was forced to maintain himself in a rather fatiguing attitude, by standing on a step-ladder which the widow had been careful to place there.

"There's a gentleman with him," she whispered, as she retired.

Jules then beheld a man employed in dressing a number of wounds on the shoulders of Ferragus, whose head he recognized from the description given to him by Monsieur de Maulincour.

"When do you think those wounds will heal?" asked Ferragus.

"I don't know," said the other man. "The doctors say those wounds will require seven or eight more dressings."

"Well, then, good-bye until to-night," said Ferragus, holding out his hand to the man, who had just replaced the bandage.

"Yes, to-night," said the other, pressing his hand cordially. "I wish I could see you past your sufferings."

"To-morrow Monsieur de Funcal's papers will be delivered to us, and Henri Bourignard will be dead forever," said Ferragus. "Those fatal marks which have cost us so dear no longer exist. I shall become once more a social being, a man among men, and more of a man than the sailor whom the fishes are eating. God knows it is not for my own sake I have made myself a Portuguese count!"

"Poor Gratien!—you, the wisest of us all, our beloved brother, the Benjamin of the band; as you very well know."

"Adieu; keep an eye on Maulincour."

"You can rest easy on that score."

"Ho! stay, marquis," cried the convict.

"What is it?"

"Ida is capable of everything after the scene of last night. If she should throw herself into the river, I would not fish her out. She knows the secret of my name, and she'll keep it better there. But still, look after her; for she is, in her way, a good girl."

“Very well.”

The stranger departed. Ten minutes later Jules heard, with a feverish shudder, the rustle of a silk gown, and almost recognized by their sound the steps of his wife.

“Well, father,” said Clémence, “my poor father, are you better? What courage you have shown!”

“Come here, my child,” replied Ferragus, holding out his hand to her.

Clémence held her forehead to him and he kissed it.

“Now tell me, what is the matter, my little girl? What are these new troubles?”

“Troubles, father! it concerns the life or death of the daughter you have loved so much. Indeed you must, as I wrote you yesterday, you *must* find a way to see my poor Jules to-day. If you knew how good he has been to me, in spite of all suspicions apparently so legitimate. Father, my love is my very life. Would you see me die? Ah! I have suffered so much that my life, I feel it! is in danger.”

“And all because of the curiosity of that miserable Parisian?” cried Ferragus. “I’d burn Paris down if I lost you, my daughter. Ha! you may know what a lover is, but you don’t yet know what a father can do.”

“Father, you frighten me when you look at me in that way. Don’t weigh such different feelings in the

same scales. I had a husband before I knew that my father was living — ”

“ If your husband was the first to lay kisses on your forehead, I was the first to drop tears upon it,” replied Ferragus. “ But don’t feel anxious, Clémence, speak to me frankly. I love you enough to rejoice in the knowledge that you are happy, though I, your father, may have little place in your heart, while you fill the whole of mine.”

“ Ah! what good such words do me! You make me love you more and more, though I seem to rob something from my Jules. But, my kind father, think what his sufferings are. What may I tell him to-day?”

“ My child, do you think I waited for your letter to save you from this threatened danger? Do you know what will become of those who venture to touch your happiness, or come between us? Have you never been aware that a second providence was guarding your life? Twelve men of power and intellect form a phalanx round your love and your existence, — ready to do all things to protect you. Think of your father, who has risked death to meet you in the public promenades, or see you asleep in your little bed in your mother’s home, during the night-time. Could such a father, to whom your innocent caresses gave strength to live when a man of honor ought to have died to escape his infamy, could *I*, in short, I who breathe through your

lips, and see with your eyes, and feel with your heart, could I fail to defend with the claws of a lion and the soul of a father, my only blessing, my life, my daughter? Since the death of that angel, your mother, I have dreamed but of one thing, — the happiness of pressing you to my heart in the face of the whole earth, of burying the convict, — ” He paused a moment, and then added : “ — of giving you a father, a father who could press without shame your husband’s hand, who could live without fear in both your hearts, who could say to all the world, ‘ This is my daughter,’ — in short, to be a happy father.”

“ Oh, father ! father ! ”

“ After infinite difficulty, after searching the whole globe,” continued Ferragus, “ my friends have found me the skin of a dead man in which to take my place once more in social life. A few days hence, I shall be Monsieur de Funcal, a Portuguese count. Ah ! my dear child, there are few men of my age who would have had the patience to learn Portuguese and English, which were spoken fluently by that devil of a sailor, who was drowned at sea.”

“ But, my dear father — ”

“ All has been foreseen, and prepared. A few days hence, his Majesty John VI., King of Portugal will be my accomplice. My child, you must have a little patience where your father has had so much. But ah !

what would I not do to reward your devotion for the last three years, — coming religiously to comfort your old father, at the risk of your own peace ! ”

“ Father ! ” cried Clémence, taking his hands and kissing them.

“ Come, my child, have courage still ; keep my fatal secret a few days longer, till the end is reached. Jules is not an ordinary man, I know ; but are we sure that his lofty character and his noble love may not impel him to dislike the daughter of a — ”

“ Oh ! ” cried Clémence, “ you have read my heart ; I have no other fear than that. The very thought turns me to ice,” she added, in a heart-rending tone. “ But, father, think that I have promised him the truth in two hours.”

“ If so, my daughter, tell him to go to the Portuguese embassy and see the Comte de Funcal, your father. I will be there.”

“ But Monsieur de Maulincour has told him of Ferragus. Oh, father, what torture, to deceive, deceive, deceive ! ”

“ Need you say that to me ? But only a few days more, and no living man will be able to expose me. Besides, Monsieur de Maulincour is beyond the faculty of remembering. Come, dry your tears, my silly child, and think — ”

At this instant a terrible cry rang from the room in which Jules Desmarests was stationed.

The clamor was heard by Madame Jules and Ferragus through the opening of the wall, and struck them with terror.

"Go and see what it means, Clémence," said her father.

Clémence ran rapidly down the little staircase, found the door into Madame Gruget's apartment wide open, heard the cries which echoed from the upper floor, went up the stairs, guided by the noise of sobs, and caught these words before she entered the fatal chamber: —

"You, monsieur, you, with your horrid inventions,— you are the cause of her death!"

"Hush, miserable woman!" replied Jules, putting his handkerchief on the mouth of the old woman, who began at once to cry out, "Murder! help!"

At this instant Clémence entered, saw her husband, uttered a cry, and fled away. .

"Who will save my child?" cried the widow Gruget. "You have murdered her."

"How?" asked Jules, mechanically, for he was horror-struck at being seen by his wife.

"Read that," said the old woman, giving him a letter. "Can money or annuities console me for that?"

Farewell, mother! I bequeeth you what I have. I beg your pardon for my forlts, and the last greef to which I put

you by ending my life in the river. Henry, who I love more than myself, says I have made his misfortuns, and as he has driften me away, and I have lost all my hops of merrying him, I am going to droun myself. I shall go abov Neuilly, so that they can't put me in the Morg. If Henry does not hate me anny more after I am ded, ask him to berry a pore girl whose hart beet for him only, and to forgif me, for I did rong to medle in what did n't consern me. Tak care of his wounds. How much he sufered, pore fellow! I shall have as much corage to kill myself as he had to burn his bak. Carry home the corsets I have finished. And pray God for your daughter.

IDA.

"Take this letter to Monsieur de Funcal, who is upstairs," said Jules. "He alone can save your daughter, if there is still time."

So saying he disappeared, running like a man who has committed a crime. His legs trembled. The hot blood poured into his swelling heart in torrents greater than at any other moment of his life, and left it again with untold violence. Conflicting thoughts struggled in his mind, and yet one thought predominated,—he had not been loyal to the being he loved most. It was impossible for him to argue with his conscience, whose voice, rising high with conviction, came like an echo of those inward cries of his love during the cruel hours of doubt he had lately lived through.

He spent the greater part of the day wandering about Paris, for he dared not go home. This man of

integrity and honor feared to meet the spotless brow of the woman he had misjudged. We estimate wrong-doing in proportion to the purity of our conscience; the deed which is scarcely a fault to some hearts, takes the proportions of a crime in certain unsullied souls. The slightest stain on the white garment of a virgin makes it a thing ignoble as the rags of a mendicant. Between the two the difference lies in the misfortune of the one, the wrong-doing of the other. God never measures repentance; he never apportions it. As much is needed to efface a spot as to obliterate the crimes of a lifetime. These reflections fell with all their weight on Jules; passions, like human laws, will not pardon, and their reasoning is more just; for are they not based upon a conscience of their own as infallible as an instinct?

Jules finally came home pale, despondent, crushed beneath a sense of his wrong-doing, and yet expressing in spite of himself the joy his wife's innocence had given him. He entered her room all throbbing with emotion; she was in bed with a high fever. He took her hand, kissed it, and covered it with tears.

"Dear angel," he said, when they were alone, "it is repentance."

"And for what?" she answered.

As she made that reply, she laid her head back upon the pillow, closed her eyes, and remained motionless,

keeping the secret of her sufferings that she might not frighten her husband,—the tenderness of a mother, the delicacy of an angel! All the woman was in her answer.

The silence lasted long. Jules, thinking her asleep, went to question Joséphine as to her mistress's condition.

“ Madame came home half-dead, monsieur. We sent at once for Monsieur Haudry.”

“ Did he come? What did he say?”

“ He said nothing, monsieur. He did not seem satisfied; gave orders that no one should go near madame except the nurse, and said he should come back this evening.”

Jules returned softly to his wife's room and sat down in a chair before the bed. There he remained, motionless, with his eyes fixed on those of Clémence. When she raised her eyelids she saw him, and through those lids passed a tender glance, full of passionate love, free from reproach and bitterness,—a look which fell like a flame of fire upon the heart of that husband, nobly absolved and forever loved by the being whom he had killed. The presentiment of death struck both their minds with equal force. Their looks were blended in one anguish, as their hearts had long been blended in one love, felt equally by both, and shared equally. No questions were uttered; a horrible certainty was

there,—in the wife an absolute generosity ; in the husband an awful remorse ; then, in both souls the same vision of the end, the same conviction of fatality.

There came a moment when, thinking his wife asleep, Jules kissed her softly on the forehead ; then after long contemplation of that cherished face, he said : —

“ O God ! leave me this angel still a little while that I may blot out my wrong by love and adoration. As a daughter, she is sublime ; as a wife, what word can express her ? ”

Clémence raised her eyes ; they were full of tears.

“ You pain me,” she said, in a feeble voice.

It was getting late ; Doctor Haudry came, and requested the husband to withdraw during his visit. When the doctor left the sick-room Jules asked him no question ; one gesture was enough.

“ Call in consultation any physician in whom you place confidence ; I may be wrong.”

“ Doctor, tell me the truth. I am a man, and I can bear it. Besides, I have the deepest interest in knowing it ; I have certain affairs to settle.”

“ Madame Jules is dying,” said the physician. “ There is some moral malady which has made great progress, and it has complicated her physical condition, which was already dangerous, and made still more so by her great imprudence. To walk about

barefooted at night! to go out when I forbade it! on foot yesterday in the rain, to-day in a carriage! She must have meant to kill herself. But still, my judgment is not final; she has youth, and a most amazing nervous strength. It may be best to risk all to win all by employing some violent reagent. But I will not take upon myself to order it; nor will I advise it; in consultation I shall oppose it."

Jules returned to his wife. For eleven days and eleven nights he remained beside her bed, taking no sleep except during the day when he laid his head upon the foot of the bed. No man ever pushed the jealousy of care and the craving for devotion to such an extreme as he. He could not endure that the slightest service should be done by others for his wife. There were days of uncertainty, false hopes, now a little better, then a crisis,—in short, all the horrible mutations of death as it wavers, hesitates, and finally strikes. Madame Jules always found strength to smile at her husband. She pitied him, knowing that soon he would be alone. It was a double death,—that of life, that of love; but life grew feebler and love grew mightier. One frightful night there was, when Clémence passed through that delirium which precedes the death of youth. She talked of her happy love, she talked of her father; she related her mother's revelations on her death-bed, and the obligations that

mother had laid upon her. She struggled, not for life, but for her love which she could not leave.

"Grant, O God!" she said, "that he may not know I want him to die with me."

Jules, unable to bear the scene, was at that moment in the adjoining room, and did not hear the prayer, which he would doubtless have fulfilled.

When this crisis was over, Madame Jules recovered some strength. The next day she was beautiful and tranquil; hope seemed to come to her; she adorned herself, as the dying often do. Then she asked to be alone all day, and sent away her husband with one of those entreaties made so earnestly that they are granted as we grant the prayer of a little child.

Jules, indeed, had need of this day. He went to Monsieur de Maulincour to demand the satisfaction agreed upon between them. It was not without great difficulty that he succeeded in reaching the presence of the author of these misfortunes; but the vidame, when he learned that the visit related to an affair of honor, obeyed the precepts of his whole life, and himself took Jules into the baron's chamber.

Monsieur Desmarests looked about him in search of his antagonist.

"Yes! that is really he," said the vidame, motioning to a man who was sitting in an arm-chair beside the fire.

"Who is it? Jules?" said the dying man in a broken voice.

Auguste had lost the only faculty that makes us live — memory. Jules Desmarests recoiled with horror at this sight. He could not even recognize the elegant young man in that thing without — as Bossuet said — a name in any language. It was, in truth, a corpse with whitened hair, its bones scarce covered with a wrinkled, blighted, withered skin,— a corpse with white eyes motionless, mouth hideously gaping, like those of idiots or vicious men killed by excesses. No trace of intelligence remained upon that brow, nor in any feature; nor was there in that flabby flesh either color or the faintest appearance of circulating blood. Here was a shrunken, withered creature brought to the state of those monsters we see preserved in museums, floating in alcohol. Jules fancied that he saw above that face the terrible head of Ferragus, and his own anger was silenced by such a vengeance. The husband found pity in his heart for the vacant wreck of what was once a man.

"The duel has taken place," said the vidame.

"But he has killed many," answered Jules, sorrowfully.

"And many dear ones," added the old man. "His grandmother is dying; and I shall follow her soon into the grave."

On the morrow of this day, Madame Jules grew worse from hour to hour. She used a moment's strength to take a letter from beneath her pillow, and gave it eagerly to her husband with a sign that was easy to understand,—she wished to give him, in a kiss, her last breath. He took it, and she died. Jules fell half-dead himself and was taken to his brother's house. There, as he deplored in tears his absence of the day before, his brother told him that this separation was eagerly desired by Clémence, who wished to spare him the sight of the religious paraphernalia, so terrible to tender imaginations, which the Church displays when conferring the last sacraments upon the dying.

“ You could not have borne it,” said his brother. “ I could hardly bear the sight myself, and all the servants wept. Clémence was like a saint. She gathered strength to bid us all good-bye, and that voice, heard for the last time, rent our hearts. When she asked pardon for the pain she might unwillingly have caused her servants, there were cries and sobs and —”

“ Enough, enough ! ” said Jules.

He wanted to be alone, that he might read the last words of the woman whom all had loved, and who had passed away like a flower.

“ My beloved ; this is my last will. Why should we not make wills for the treasures of our hearts, as for our worldly property ? Was not my love my property, my all ? I mean

here to dispose of my love : it was the only fortune of your Clémence, and it is all that she can leave you in dying. Jules, you love me still, and I die happy. The doctors may explain my death as they think best; I alone know the true cause. I shall tell it to you, whatever pain it may cause you. I cannot carry with me, in a heart all yours, a secret which you do not share, although I die the victim of an enforced silence.

“Jules, I was nurtured and brought up in the deepest solitude, far from the vices and the falsehoods of the world, by the loving woman whom you knew. Society did justice to her conventional charm, for that is what pleases society ; but I knew secretly her precious soul, I could cherish the mother who made my childhood a joy without bitterness, and I knew why I cherished her. Was not that to love doubly? Yes, I loved her, I feared her, I respected her ; yet nothing oppressed my heart, neither fear nor respect. I was all in all to her ; she was all in all to me. For nineteen happy years, without a care, my soul, solitary amid the world which muttered round me, reflected only her pure image ; my heart beat for her and through her. I was scrupulously pious ; I found pleasure in being innocent before God. My mother cultivated all noble and self-respecting sentiments in me. Ah! it gives me happiness to tell you, Jules, that I now know I was indeed a young girl, and that I came to you virgin in heart.

“When I left that absolute solitude, when, for the first time, I braided my hair and crowned it with almond blossoms, when I added, with delight, a few satin knots to my white dress, thinking of the world I was to see, and which I was curious to see—Jules, that innocent and modest coquetry was done for you! Yes, as I entered the world, I

saw *you* first of all. Your face, I remarked it; it stood out from the rest; your person pleased me; your voice, your manners, all inspired me with pleasant presentiments. When you came up, when you spoke to me, the color on your forehead, the tremble in your voice,—that moment gave me memories with which I throb as I now write to you, as I now, for the last time, think of them. Our love was at first the keenest of sympathies, but it was soon discovered by each of us and then, as speedily, shared; just as, in after times, we have both equally felt and shared innumerable happinesses. From that moment my mother was only second in my heart. Next, I was yours, all yours. There is my life, and all my life, dear husband.

“And here is what remains for me to tell you. One evening, a few days before my mother’s death, she revealed to me the secret of her life,—not without burning tears. I have loved you better since the day I learned from the priest as he absolved my mother that there are passions condemned by the world and by the Church. But surely God will not be severe when they are the sins of souls as tender as that of my mother; only, that dear woman could never bring herself to repent. She loved much, Jules; she was all love. So I have prayed daily for her, but never judged her.

“That night I learned the cause of her deep maternal tenderness; then I also learned that there was in Paris a man whose life and whose love centred on me; that your fortune was his doing, and that he loved you. I learned also that he was exiled from society and bore a tarnished name; but that he was more unhappy for me, for us, than for himself. My mother was all his comfort; she was dying, and I promised to take her place. With all the ardor of a soul whose

feelings had never been perverted, I saw only the happiness of softening the bitterness of my mother's last moments, and I pledged myself to continue her work of secret charity,—the charity of the heart. The first time that I saw my father was beside the bed where my mother had just expired. When he raised his tearful eyes, it was to see in me a revival of his dead hopes. I had sworn, not to tell a lie, but to keep silence; and that silence what woman could have broken it?

“There is my fault, Jules,—a fault which I expiate by death. I doubted you. But fear is so natural to a woman; above all, a woman who knows what it is that she may lose. I trembled for our love. My father's secret seemed to me the death of my happiness; and the more I loved, the more I feared. I dared not avow this feeling to my father; it would have wounded him, and in his situation a wound was agony. But, without a word from me, he shared my fears. That fatherly heart trembled for my happiness as much as I trembled for myself; but it dared not speak, obeying the same delicacy that kept me mute. Yes, Jules, I believed that you could not love the daughter of Gratien Bourignard as you loved your Clémence. Without that terror could I have kept back anything from you,—you who live in every fold of my heart?

“The day when that odious, unfortunate young officer spoke to you, I was forced to lie. That day, for the second time in my life, I knew what pain was; that pain has steadily increased until this moment, when I speak with you for the last time. What matters now my father's position? You know all. I could, by the help of my love, have conquered my illness and borne its sufferings; but I cannot stifle the voice of doubt. Is it not probable

that my origin would affect the purity of your love and weaken it, diminish it? That fear nothing has been able to quench in me. There, Jules, is the cause of my death. I cannot live fearing a word, a look,—a word you may never say, a look you may never give; but, I cannot help it, I fear them. I die beloved; there is my consolation.

“I have known, for the last three years, that my father and his friends have well-nigh moved the world to deceive the world. That I might have a station in life, they have bought a dead man, a reputation, a fortune, so that a living man might live again, restored; and all this for you, for us. We were never to have known of it. Well, my death will save my father from that falsehood, for he will not survive me.

“Farewell, Jules; my heart is all here. To show you my love in its agony of fear, is not that bequeathing my whole soul to you? I could never have the strength to speak to you; I have only enough to write. I have just confessed to God the sins of my life. I have promised to fill my mind with the King of Heaven only; but I must confess myself to him who is, for me, the whole of earth. Alas! shall I not be pardoned for this last sigh between the life that was and the life that shall be? Farewell, my Jules, my loved one! I go to God, with whom is Love without a cloud, to whom you will follow me. There, before his throne, united forever, we may love each other throughout the ages. This hope alone can comfort me. If I am worthy of being there at once, I will follow you through life. My soul shall bear you company; it will wrap you about, for *you* must stay here still,—ah! here below. Lead a holy life that you may the more surely come to me. You can do such good upon this earth! Is it not an angel’s mission for the suffering

soul to shed happiness about him,—to give to others that which he has not? I bequeath you to the Unhappy. Their smiles, their tears, are the only ones of which I cannot be jealous. We shall find a charm in sweet beneficence. Can we not live together still if you would join my name—your Clémence—in these good works?

“After loving as we have loved, there is naught but God, Jules. God does not lie; God never betrays. Adore him only, I charge you! Lead those who suffer up to him; comfort the sorrowing members of his Church. Farewell, dear soul that I have filled! I know you; you will never love again. I may die happy in the thought that makes all women happy. Yes, my grave will be your heart. After this childhood I have just related, has not my life flowed on within that heart? Dead, you will never drive me forth. I am proud of that rare life! You will know me only in the flower of my youth; I leave you regrets without disillusionments: Jules, it is a happy death.

“You, who have so fully understood me, may I ask one thing more of you,—superfluous request, perhaps, the fulfilment of a woman’s fancy, the prayer of a jealousy we all must feel,—I pray you to burn all that especially belonged to us, destroy our chamber, annihilate all that is a memory of our happiness.

“Once more, farewell,—the last farewell! It is all love, and so will be my parting thought, my parting breath.”

When Jules had read that letter there came into his heart one of those wild frenzies of which it is impossible to describe the awful anguish. All sorrows are individual; their effects are not subjected to any fixed

rule. Certain men will stop their ears to hear nothing ; some women close their eyes hoping never to see again ; great and splendid souls are met with who fling themselves into sorrow as into an abyss. In the matter of despair, all is true.

V.

CONCLUSION.

JULES escaped from his brother's house and returned home, wishing to pass the night beside his wife, and see till the last moment that celestial creature. As he walked along with an indifference to life known only to those who have reached the last degree of wretchedness, he thought of how, in India, the law ordained that widows should die; he longed to die. He was not yet crushed; the fever of his grief was still upon him. He reached his home and went up into the sacred chamber; he saw his Clémence on the bed of death, beautiful, like a saint, her hair smoothly laid upon her forehead, her hands joined, her body wrapped already in its shroud. Tapers were lighted, a priest was praying, Josephine kneeling in a corner, wept, and, near the bed, were two men. One was Ferragus. He stood erect, motionless, gazing at his daughter with dry eyes; his head you might have taken for bronze: he did see Jules.

The other man was Jacquet,—Jacquet, to whom Madame Jules had been ever kind. Jacquet felt for her one of those respectful friendships which rejoice

the untroubled heart; a gentle passion; love without its desires and its storms. He had come to pay his debt of tears, to bid a long adieu to the wife of his friend, to kiss, for the first time, the icy brow of the woman he had tacitly made his sister.

All was silence. Here death was neither terrible as in the churches, nor pompous as it makes its way along the streets; no, it was death in the home, a tender death; here were pomps of the heart, tears drawn from the eyes of all. Jules sat down beside Jacquet and pressed his hand; then, without uttering a word, all these persons remained as they were till morning.

When daylight paled the tapers, Jacquet, foreseeing the painful scenes which would then take place, drew Jules away into another room. At this moment the husband looked at the father, and Ferragus looked at Jules. The two sorrows arraigned each other, measured each other, and comprehended each other in that look. A flash of fury shone for an instant in the eyes of Ferragus.

“ You killed her,” thought he.

“ Why was I distrusted?” seemed the answer of the husband.

The scene was one that might have passed between two tigers recognizing the futility of a struggle and, after a moment’s hesitation, turning away, without even a roar.

“Jacquet,” said Jules, “have you attended to everything?”

“Yes, to everything,” replied his friend, “but a man had forestalled me who had ordered and paid for all.”

“He tears his daughter from me!” cried the husband, with the violence of despair.

Jules rushed back to his wife’s room; but the father was there no longer. Clémence had now been placed in a leaden coffin, and workmen were employed in soldering the cover. Jules returned, horrified by the sight; the sound of the hammers the men were using made him mechanically burst into tears.

“Jacquet,” he said, “out of this dreadful night one idea has come to me, only one, but one I must make a reality at any price. I cannot let Clémence stay in any cemetery in Paris. I wish to burn her,—to gather her ashes and keep her with me. Say nothing of this, but manage on my behalf to have it done. I am going to *her* chamber, where I shall stay until the time has come to go. You alone may come in there to tell me what you have done. Go, and spare nothing.”

During the morning, Madame Jules, after lying in a mortuary chapel at the door of her house, was taken to Saint-Roch. The church was hung with black throughout. The sort of luxury thus displayed had drawn a crowd; for in Paris all things are sights, even true

grief. There are persons who stand at their windows to see how a son deplores a mother as he follows her body; there are others who hire commodious seats to see how a head is made to fall. No people in the world have such insatiate eyes as the Parisians. On this occasion, inquisitive minds were particularly surprised to see the six lateral chapels at Saint-Roch also hung in black. Two men in mourning were listening to a mortuary mass said in each chapel. In the chancel no other persons but Monsieur Desmarests, the notary, and Jacquet were present; the servants of the household were outside the screen. To church loungers there was something inexplicable in so much pomp and so few mourners. But Jules had been determined that no indifferent person should be present at the ceremony.

High mass was celebrated with the sombre magnificence of funeral services. Beside the ministers in ordinary of Saint-Roch, thirteen priests from other parishes were present. Perhaps never did the *Dies iræ* produce upon Christians, assembled by chance, by curiosity, and thirsting for emotions, an effect so profound, so nervously glacial as that now caused by this hymn when the eight voices of the precentors, accompanied by the voices of the priests and the choir-boys, intoned it alternately. From the six lateral chapels twelve other childish voices rose shrilly in grief, mingling

with the choir voices lamentably. From all parts of the church this mourning issued; cries of anguish responded to the cries of fear. That terrible music was the voice of sorrows hidden from the world, of secret friendships weeping for the dead. Never, in any human religion, have the terrors of the soul, violently torn from the body and stormily shaken in presence of the fulminating majesty of God, been rendered with such force. Before that clamor of clamors all artists and their most passionate compositions must bow humiliated. No, nothing can stand beside that hymn, which sums all human passions, gives them a galvanic life beyond the coffin, and leaves them, palpitating still, before the living and avenging God. These cries of childhood, mingling with the tones of older voices, including thus in the Song of Death all human life and its developments, recalling the sufferings of the cradle, swelling to the griefs of other ages in the stronger male voices and the quavering of the priests,—all this strident harmony, big with lightning and thunderbolts, does it not speak with equal force to the daring imagination, the coldest heart, nay, to philosophers themselves? As we hear it, we think God speaks; the vaulted arches of no church are mere material; they have a voice, they tremble, they scatter fear by the might of their echoes. We think we see unnumbered dead arising and holding out their hands.

It is no more a father, a wife, a child,—humanity itself is rising from its dust.

It is impossible to judge of the catholic, apostolic, and Roman faith, unless the soul has known that deepest grief of mourning for a loved one lying beneath the pall; unless it has felt the emotions that fill the heart, uttered by that Hymn of Despair, by those cries that crush the mind, by that sacred fear augmenting strophe by strophe, ascending heavenward, which terrifies, belittles, and elevates the soul, and leaves within our minds, as the last sound ceases, a consciousness of immortality. We have met and struggled with the vast idea of the Infinite. After that, all is silent in the church. No word is said; sceptics themselves *know not what they are feeling*. Spanish genius alone was able to bring this untold majesty to untold griefs.

When the solemn ceremony was over, twelve men came from the six chapels and stood around the coffin to hear the song of hope which the Church intones for the Christian soul before the human form is buried. Then, each man entered alone a mourning-coach; Jacquet and Monsieur Desmarests took the thirteenth; the servants followed on foot. An hour later, they were at the summit of that cemetery popularly called Père-Lachaise. The unknown twelve men stood in a circle round the grave, where the coffin had been laid in presence of a crowd of loiterers gathered from all parts

of this public garden. After a few short prayers the priest threw a handful of earth on the remains of this woman, and the grave-diggers, having asked for their fee, made haste to fill the grave in order to dig another.

Here this history seems to end; but perhaps it would be incomplete if, after giving a rapid sketch of Parisian life, and following certain of its capricious undulations, the effects of death were omitted. Death in Paris is unlike death in any other capital; few persons know the trials of true grief in its struggle with civilization, and the government of Paris. Perhaps, also, Monsieur Jules and Ferragus XXIII. may have proved sufficiently interesting to make a few words on their after life not entirely out of place. Besides, some persons like to be told all, and wish, as one of our cleverest critics has remarked, to know by what chemical process oil was made to burn in Aladdin's lamp.

Jacquet, being a government employé, naturally applied to the authorities for permission to exhume the body of Madame Jules and burn it. He went to see the prefect of police, under whose protection the dead sleep. That functionary demanded a petition. The blank was bought that gives to sorrow its proper administrative form; it was necessary to employ the bureaucratic jargon to express the wishes of a man so crushed that words, perhaps, were lacking to him, and

it was also necessary to coldly and briefly repeat on the margin the nature of the request, which was done in these words: “The petitioner respectfully asks for the incineration of his wife.”

When the official charged with making the report to the Councillor of State and prefect of police read that marginal note, explaining the object of the petition, and couched, as requested, in the plainest terms, he said: —

“This is a serious matter! my report cannot be ready under eight days.”

Jules, to whom Jacquet was obliged to speak of this delay, comprehended the words that Ferragus had said in his hearing, “I’ll burn Paris!” Nothing seemed to him now more natural than to annihilate that receptacle of monstrous things.

“But,” he said to Jacquet, “you must go to the minister of the Interior, and get your minister to speak to him.”

Jacquet went to the minister of the Interior, and asked an audience; it was granted, but the time appointed was two weeks later. Jacquet was a persistent man. He travelled from bureau to bureau, and finally reached the private secretary of the minister of the Interior, to whom he had made the private secretary of his own minister say a word. These high protectors aiding, he obtained for the morrow a second inter-

view, in which, being armed with a line from the autocrat of Foreign affairs to the pacha of the Interior, Jacquet hoped to carry the matter by assault. He was ready with reasons, and answers to peremptory questions,—in short, he was armed at all points; but he failed.

“This matter does not concern me,” said the minister; “it belongs to the prefect of police. Besides, there is no law giving a husband any legal right to the body of his wife, nor to fathers those of their children. The matter is serious. There are questions of public utility involved which will have to be examined. The interests of the city of Paris might suffer. Therefore if the matter depended on me, which it does not, I could not decide *hic et nunc*; I should require a report.”

A report is to the present system of administration what limbo or hades is to Christianity. Jacquet knew very well the mania for “reports;” he had not waited until this occasion to groan at that bureaucratic absurdity. He knew that since the invasion into public business of the *Report* (an administrative revolution consummated in 1804) there was never known a single minister who would take upon himself to have an opinion or to decide the slightest matter, unless that opinion or matter had been winnowed, sifted and plucked to bits by the paper-spoilers, quill-drivers, and splendid intellects of his particular bureau. Jacquet—he was

one of those men who are worthy of Plutarch as biographer — saw that he had made a mistake in his management of the affair, and had, in fact, rendered it impossible by trying to proceed legally. The thing he should have done was to have taken Madame Jules to one of Desmaret's estates in the country ; and there, under the good-natured authority of some village mayor to have gratified the sorrowful longing of his friend. Law, constitutional and administrative, begets nothing ; it is a barren monster for peoples, for kings, and for private interests. But the peoples decipher no principles but those that are writ in blood, and the evils of legality will always be pacific ; it flattens a nation down, that is all. Jacquet, a man of modern liberty, returned home reflecting on the benefits of arbitrary power.

When he went with his report to Jules, he found it necessary to deceive him, for the unhappy man was in a high fever, unable to leave his bed. The minister of the Interior mentioned, at a ministerial dinner that same evening, the singular fancy of a Parisian in wishing to burn his wife after the manner of the Romans. The clubs of Paris took up the subject, and talked for a while of the burials of antiquity. Ancient things were just then becoming a fashion, and some persons declared that it would be a fine thing to re-establish, for distinguished persons, the funeral pyre. This opinion

had its defenders and its detractors. Some said that there were too many such personages, and the price of wood would be enormously increased by such a custom ; moreover, it would be absurd to see our ancestors in their urns in the procession at Longchamps. And if the urns were valuable, they were likely some day to be sold at auction, full of respectable ashes, or seized by creditors,— a race of men who respected nothing. The other side made answer that our ancestors were much safer in urns than at Père-Lachaise, for before very long the city of Paris would be compelled to order a Saint-Bartholomew against its dead, who were invading the neighboring country, and threatening to invade the territory of Brie. It was, in short, one of those futile but witty discussions which sometimes cause deep and painful wounds. Happily for Jules, he knew nothing of the conversations, the witty speeches, and arguments which his sorrow had furnished to the tongues of Paris.

The prefect of police was indignant that Monsieur Jacquet had appealed to a minister to avoid the wise delays of the commissioners of the public highways ; for the exhumation of Madame Jules was a question belonging to that department. The police bureau was doing its best to reply promptly to the petition ; one appeal was quite sufficient to set the office in motion, and once in motion matters would go far. But as for

the administration, that might take the case before the Council of state,—a machine very difficult indeed to move.

After the second day Jacquet was obliged to tell his friend that he must renounce his desire, because, in a city where the number of tears shed on black draperies is tariffed, where the laws recognize seven classes of funerals, where the scrap of ground to hold the dead is sold at its weight in silver, where grief is worked for what it is worth, where the prayers of the Church are costly, and the vestry claim payment for extra voices in the *Dies iræ*,—all attempt to get out of the rut prescribed by the authorities for sorrow is useless and impossible.

“It would have been to me,” said Jules, “a comfort in my misery. I meant to have died away from here, and I hoped to hold her in my arms in a distant grave. I did not know that bureaucracy could send its claws into our very coffins.”

He now wished to see if room had been left for him beside his wife. The two friends went to the cemetery. When they reached it they found (as at the doors of museums, galleries, and coach-offices) *ciceroni*, who proposed to guide them through the labyrinth of Père-Lachaise. Neither Jules nor Jacquet could have found the spot where Clémence lay. Ah, frightful anguish! They went to the lodge to consult the porter of the

cemetery. The dead have a porter, and there are hours when the dead are "not receiving." It is necessary to upset all the rules and regulations of the upper and lower police to obtain permission to weep at night, in silence and solitude, over the grave where a loved one lies. There's a rule for summer and a rule for winter about this.

Certainly, of all the porters in Paris, the porter of Père-Lachaise is the luckiest. In the first place, he has no gate-cord to pull; then, instead of a lodge, he has a house,—an establishment which is not quite ministerial, although a vast number of persons come under his administration, and a good many employés. And this governor of the dead has a salary, with emoluments, and acts under powers of which none complain; he plays despot at his ease. His lodge is not a place of business, though it has departments where the book-keeping of receipts, expenses, and profits, is carried on. The man is not a *suisse*, nor a concierge, nor actually a porter. The gate which admits the dead stands wide open; and though there are monuments and buildings to be cared for, he is not a care-taker. In short, he is an indefinable anomaly, an authority which participates in all, and yet is nothing,—an authority placed, like the dead on whom it is based, outside of all. Nevertheless, this exceptional man grows out of the city of Paris,—that chimerical creation like the ship

which is its emblem, that creature of reason moving on a thousand paws which are seldom unanimous in motion.

This guardian of the cemetery may be called a concierge who has reached the condition of a functionary, not soluble by dissolution ! His place is far from being a sinecure. He does not allow any one to be buried without a permit ; he must count his dead. He points out to you in this vast field the six feet square of earth where you will one day put all you love, or all you hate, a mistress, or a cousin. Yes, remember this : all the feelings and emotions of Paris come to end here, at this porter's lodge, where they are administrationized. This man has registers in which his dead are booked ; they are in their graves, and also on his records. He has under him keepers, gardeners, grave-diggers, and their assistants. He is a personage. Mourning hearts do not speak to him at first. He does not appear at all except in serious cases, such as one corpse mistaken for another, a murdered body, an exhumation, a dead man coming to life. The bust of the reigning king is in his hall ; possibly he keeps the late royal, imperial, and quasi-royal busts in some cupboard, — a sort of little Père-Lachaise all ready for revolutions. In short, he is a public man, an excellent man, good husband, and good father, — epitaph apart. But so many diverse sentiments have passed before him on

biers ; he has seen so many tears, true and false ; he has beheld sorrow under so many aspects and on so many faces ; he has heard such endless thousands of eternal woes,—that to him sorrow has come to be nothing more than a stone an inch thick, four feet long, and twenty-four inches wide. As for regrets, they are the annoyances of his office ; he neither breakfasts nor dines without first wiping off the rain of an inconsolable affliction. He is kind and tender to other feelings ; he will weep over a stage-hero, over Monsieur Germeuil in the “*Auberge des Adrets*,” the man with the butter-colored breeches, murdered by Macaire ; but his heart is ossified in the matter of real dead men. Dead men are ciphers, numbers, to him ; it is his business to organize death. Yet he does meet, three times in a century, perhaps, with an occasion when his part becomes sublime, and then he *is* sublime through every hour of his day, — in times of pestilence.

When Jacquet approached him this absolute monarch was evidently out of temper.

“ I told you,” he was saying, “ to water the flowers from the rue Masséna to the place Regnault de Saint-Jean-d’Angely. You paid no attention to me ! *Sac-à-papier* ! suppose the relations should take it into their heads to come here to-day because the weather is fine, what would they say to me ? They ’d shriek as if they were burned ; they ’d say horrid things of us, and calumniate us — ”

"Monsieur," said Jacquet, "we want to know where Madame Jules is buried."

"Madame Jules *who?*" he asked. "We've had three Madame Jules within the last week. Ah," he said, interrupting himself, "here comes the funeral of Monsieur le Baron de Maulincour! A fine procession, that! He has soon followed his grandmother. Some families, when they begin to go, rattle down like a wager. Lots of bad blood in Parisians."

"Monsieur," said Jacquet, touching him on the arm, "the person I spoke of is Madame Jules Desmarests, the wife of the broker of that name."

"Ah, I know!" he replied, looking at Jacquet. "Was n't it a funeral with thirteen mourning coaches, and only one mourner in the twelve first? It was so droll we all noticed it—"

"Monsieur, take care, Monsieur Desmarests is with me; he might hear you, and what you say is not seemly."

"I beg pardon, monsieur! you are quite right. Excuse me, I took you for heirs. Monsieur," he continued, after consulting a plan of the cemetery, "Madame Jules is in the rue Maréchal Lefebre, alley No. 4, between Mademoiselle Raucourt, of the Comédie-Française, and Monsieur Moreau-Malvin, a butcher, for whom a handsome tomb in white marble has been ordered, which will be one of the finest in the cemetery —"

“ Monsieur,” said Jacquet, interrupting him, “ that does not help us.”

“ True,” said the official, looking round him. “ Jean,” he cried, to a man whom he saw at a little distance, “ conduct these gentlemen to the grave of Madame Jules Desmarests, the broker’s wife. You know where it is,—near to Mademoiselle Raucourt, the tomb where there’s a bust.”

The two friends followed the guide ; but they did not reach the steep path which leads to the upper part of the cemetery without having to pass through a score of proposals and requests, made, with honied softness, by the touts of marble-workers, iron-founders, and monumental sculptors.

“ If monsieur would like to order *something*, we would do it on the most reasonable terms.”

Jacquet was fortunate enough to be able to spare his friend the hearing of these proposals so agonizing to bleeding hearts ; and presently they reached the resting-place. When Jules beheld the earth so recently dug, into which the masons had stuck stakes to mark the place for the stone posts required to support the iron railing, he turned and leaned upon Jacquet’s shoulder, raising himself now and again to cast long glances at the clay mound where he was forced to leave the remains of the being in and by whom he still lived.

“ How miserably she lies there ! ” he said.

"But she is not there," said Jacquet, "she is in your memory. Come, let us go; let us leave this odious cemetery, where the dead are adorned like women for a ball."

"Suppose we take her away?"

"Can it be done?"

"All things can be done!" cried Jules. "So, I shall lie there," he added, after a pause. "There is room enough."

Jacquet finally succeeded in getting him to leave the great enclosure, divided like a chessboard by iron railings and elegant compartments, in which were tombs decorated with palms, inscriptions, and tears as cold as the stones on which sorrowing hearts had caused to be carved their regrets and coats of arms. Many good words are there engraved in black letters, epigrams reproving the curious, *concetti*, wittily turned farewells, rendezvous given at which only one side appears, pretentious biographies, glitter, rubbish and tinsel. Here the floriated thyrsus, there a lance-head, farther on Egyptian urns, now and then a few cannon; on all sides the emblems of professions, and every style of art,—Moorish, Greek, Gothic,—friezes, ovules, paintings, vases, guardian-angels, temples, together with innumerable *immortelles*, and dead rose-bushes. It is a forlorn comedy! It is another Paris, with its streets, its signs, its industries, and its lodgings; but

a Paris seen through the diminishing end of an opera-glass, a microscopic Paris reduced to the littleness of shadows, spectres, dead men, a human race which no longer has anything great about it, except its vanity. There Jules saw at his feet, in the long valley of the Seine, between the slopes of Vaugirard and Meudon and those of Belleville and Montmartre, the real Paris, wrapped in a misty blue veil produced by smoke, which the sunlight rendered at that moment diaphanous. He glanced with a constrained eye at those forty thousand houses, and said, pointing to the space comprised between the column of the Place Vendôme and the gilded cupola of the Invalides:—

“She was wrenched from me there by the fatal curiosity of that world which excites itself and meddles solely for excitement and occupation.”

Twelve miles from where they were, on the banks of the Seine, in a modest village lying on the slope of a hill of that long hilly basin in the middle of which great Paris stirs like a child in its cradle, a death scene was taking place, far indeed removed from Parisian pomps, with no accompaniment of torches or tapers or mourning-coaches, without prayers of the Church, in short, a death in all simplicity. Here are the facts: The body of a young girl was found early in the morning, stranded on the river-bank in the slime and reeds of the Seine. Men employed in dredging sand saw it

as they were getting into their frail boat on their way to their work.

"*Tiens!* fifty francs earned!" said one of them.

"True," said the other.

They approached the body.

"A handsome girl! We had better go and make our statement."

And the two dredgers, after covering the body with their jackets, went to the house of the village mayor, who was much embarrassed at having to make out the legal papers necessitated by this discovery.

The news of this event spread with the telegraphic rapidity peculiar to regions where social communications have no distractions, where gossip, scandal, calumny, in short, the social tale which feasts the world has no break of continuity from one boundary to another. Before long, persons arriving at the mayor's office released him from all embarrassment. They were able to convert the *procès-verbal* into a mere certificate of death, by recognizing the body as that of the Demoiselle Ida Gruget, corset-maker, living rue de la Corderie-du-Temple, number 14. The judiciary police of Paris arrived, and the mother, bearing her daughter's last letter. Amid the mother's moans, a doctor certified to death by asphyxia, through the injection of black blood into the pulmonary system, — which settled the matter. The inquest over, and the certificates

signed, by six o'clock the same evening authority was given to bury the grisette. The rector of the parish, however, refused to receive her into the church or to pray for her. Ida Gruget was therefore wrapped in a shroud by an old peasant-woman, put into a common pine coffin, and carried to the village cemetery by four men, followed by a few inquisitive peasant-women, who talked about the death with wonder mingled with some pity. •

The widow Gruget was charitably taken in by an old lady who prevented her from following the sad procession of her daughter's funeral. A man of triple functions, the bell-ringer, beadle, and grave-digger of the parish, had dug a grave in the half-acre cemetery behind the church,—a church well-known, a classic church, with a square tower and pointed roof covered with slate, supported on the outside by strong corner buttresses. Behind the apse of the chancel, lay the cemetery, inclosed with a dilapidated wall,—a little field full of hillocks; no marble monuments, no visitors, but surely in every furrow, tears and true regrets, which were lacking to Ida Gruget. She was cast into a corner full of tall grass and brambles. After the coffin had been laid in this field, so poetic in its simplicity, the grave-digger found himself alone, for night was coming on. While filling the grave, he stopped now and then to gaze over the wall along the road. He

was standing thus, resting on his spade, and looking at the Seine, which had brought him the body.

"Poor girl!" cried the voice of a man who suddenly appeared.

"How you made me jump, monsieur," said the grave-digger.

"Was any service held over the body you are burying?"

"No, monsieur. Monsieur le curé was n't willing. This is the first person buried here who did n't belong to the parish. Everybody knows everybody else in this place. Does monsieur — Why, he 's gone!"

Some days had elapsed when a man dressed in black called at the house of Monsieur Jules Desmarests, and without asking to see him carried up to the chamber of his wife a large porphyry vase, on which were inscribed the words: —

INVITA LEGE
CONJUGI MÆRENTI
FILIOLOÆ CINERES
RESTITUIT
AMICIS XII. JUVANTIBUS
MORIBUNDUS PATER.

"What a man!" cried Jules, bursting into tears.

Eight days sufficed the husband to obey all the wishes of his wife, and to arrange his own affairs. He

sold his practice to a brother of Martin Falleix, and left Paris while the authorities were still discussing whether it was lawful for a citizen to dispose of the body of his wife.

Who has not encountered on the boulevards of Paris, at the turn of a street, or beneath the arcades of the Palais-Royal, or in any part of the world where chance may offer him the sight, a being, man or woman, at whose aspect a thousand confused thoughts spring into his mind? At that sight we are suddenly interested, either by features of some fantastic conformation which reveal an agitated life, or by a singular effect of the whole person, produced by gestures, air, gait, clothes; or by some deep, intense look; or by other inexpressible signs which seize our minds suddenly and forcibly without our being able to explain even to ourselves the cause of our emotion. The next day other thoughts and other images have carried out of sight that passing dream. But if we meet the same personage again, either passing at some fixed hour, like the clerk of a mayor's office, who belongs to the marriage business at eight o'clock, or wandering about the public promenades, like those individuals who seem to be a sort of furniture of the streets of Paris, and who are always to be found in public places, at first representations or noted restaurants, — then this being fastens himself or

herself on our memory, and remains there like the first volume of a novel the end of which is lost. We are tempted to question this unknown person, and say, "Who are you?" "Why are you lounging here?" "By what right do you wear that pleated ruffle, that faded waist-coat, and carry that cane with an ivory top; why those blue spectacles; for what reason do you cling to that cravat of a dead and gone fashion?" Among these wandering creations some belong to the species of the Greek Hermæ; they say nothing to the soul; *they are there*, and that is all. Why? is known to none. Such figures are a type of those used by sculptors for the four Seasons, for Commerce, for Plenty, etc. Some others—former lawyers, old merchants, elderly generals—move and walk, and yet seem stationary. Like old trees that are half uprooted by the current of a river, they seem never to take part in the torrent of Paris, with its youthful, active crowd. It is impossible to know if their friends have forgotten to bury them, or whether they have escaped out of their coffins. At any rate, they have reached the condition of semi-fossils.

One of these Parisian Melmoths had come within a few days into a neighborhood of sober, quiet people, who, when the weather is fine, are invariably to be found in the space which lies between the south entrance of the Luxembourg and the north entrance of

the Observatoire,—a space without a name, the neutral space of Paris. There, Paris is no longer ; and there, Paris still lingers. The spot is a mingling of street, square, boulevard, fortification, garden, avenue, high-road, province, and metropolis; certainly, all of that is to be found there, and yet the place is nothing of all that,—it is a desert. Around this spot without a name stand the Foundling hospital, the Bourbe, the Cochin hospital, the Capucines, the hospital La Rochefoucauld, the Deaf and Dumb Asylum, the hospital of the Val-de-Grâce ; in short, all the vices and all the misfortunes of Paris find their asylum there. And (that nothing may lack in this philanthropic centre) Science there studies the tides and longitudes, Monsieur de Chateaubriand has erected the Marie-Thérèse Infirmary, and the Carmelites have founded a convent. The great events of life are represented by bells which ring incessantly through this desert,—for the mother giving birth, for the babe that is born, for the vice that succumbs, for the toiler who dies, for the virgin who prays, for the old man shaking with cold, for genius self-deluded. And a few steps off is the cemetery of Mont-Parnasse, where, hour after hour, the sorry funerals of the faubourg Saint-Marceau wend their way. This esplanade, which commands a view of Paris, has been taken possession of by bowl-players ; it is, in fact, a sort of bowling-green frequented by old gray faces, belonging

to kindly, worthy men, who seem to continue the race of our ancestors, whose countenances must only be compared with those of their surroundings.

The man who had become, during the last few days, an inhabitant of this desert region, proved an assiduous attendant at these games of bowls; and must, undoubtedly, be considered the most striking creature of these various groups, who (if it is permissible to liken Parisians to the different orders of zoology) belonged to the genus *mollusk*. The new-comer kept sympathetic step with the *cochonnet*, — the little bowl which serves as a goal and on which the interest of the game must centre. He leaned against a tree when the *cochonnet* stopped; then, with the same attention that a dog gives to his master's gestures, he looked at the other bowls flying through the air, or rolling along the ground. You might have taken him for the weird and watchful genii of the *cochonnet*. He said nothing; and the bowl-players — the most fanatic men that can be encountered among the sectarians of any faith — had never asked the reason of his dogged silence; in fact, the most observing of them thought him deaf and dumb.

When it happened that the distances between the bowls and the *cochonnet* had to be determined, the cane of this silent being was used as a measure, the players coming up and taking it from the icy hands of the old

man and returning it without a word or even a sign of friendliness. The loan of his cane seemed a servitude to which he had negatively consented. When a shower fell, he stayed near the *cochonnet*, the slave of the bowls, and the guardian of the unfinished game. Rain affected him no more than the fine weather did ; he was, like the players themselves, an intermediary species between a Parisian who has the lowest intellect of his kind and an animal which has the highest.

In other respects, pallid and shrunken, indifferent to his own person, vacant in mind, he often came barcheaded, showing his sparse white hair, and his square, yellow, bald skull, like the knee of a beggar seen through his tattered trousers. His mouth was half-open, no ideas were in his glance, no precise object appeared in his movements ; he never smiled ; he never raised his eyes to heaven, but kept them habitually on the ground, where he seemed to be looking for something. At four o'clock an old woman arrived, to take him Heaven knows where ; which she did by towing him along by the arm, as a young girl drags a wilful goat which still wants to browse by the wayside. This old man was a horrible thing to see.

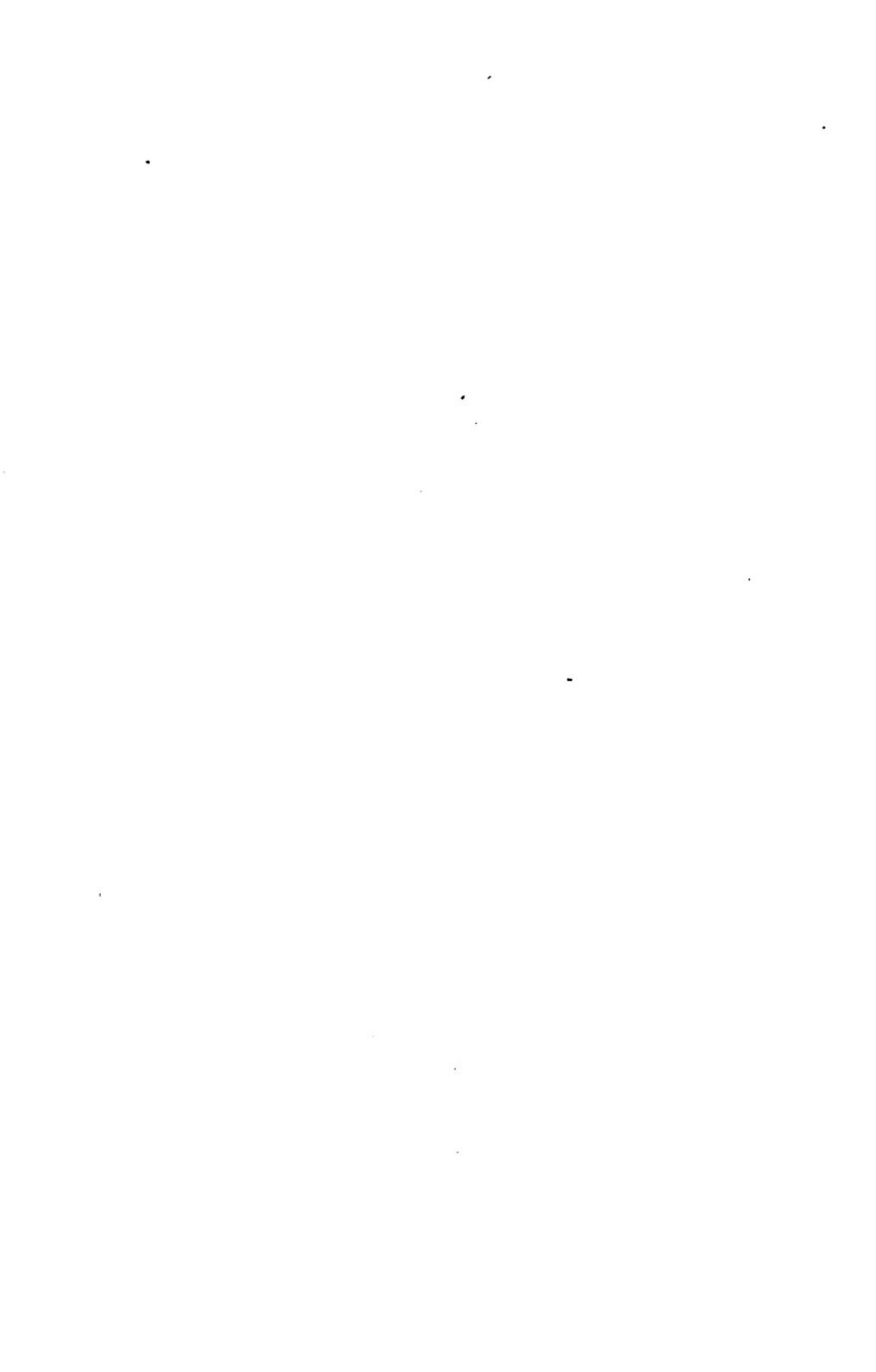
In the afternoon of the day when Jules Desmarests left Paris, his travelling-carriage, in which he was alone, passed rapidly through the rue de l'Est, and came out upon the esplanade of the Observatoire at

the moment when the old man, leaning against a tree, had allowed his cane to be taken from his hand amid the noisy vociferations of the players, pacifically irritated. Jules, thinking that he recognized that face, felt an impulse to stop, and at the same instant the carriage came to a standstill ; for the postilion, hemmed in by some handcarts, had too much respect for the game to call upon the players to make way for him.

“ It is he ! ” said Jules, beholding in that human wreck, Ferragus XXIII., chief of the Dévorants. Then, after a pause, he added, “ How he loved her ! — Go on, postilion.”

THE LAST INCARNATION OF VAUTRIN.

SCENES FROM PARISIAN LIFE.



THE
LAST INCARNATION OF VAUTRIN.

I.

THE TWO GOWNS, LEGAL AND FEMININE.

“WHAT is the matter, Madeleine?” said Madame Camusot, as her waiting-maid entered the room with the air that servants are apt to assume at critical moments.

“Madame,” replied Madeleine, “monsieur has just returned from the Palais looking so upset, and in such a state, that madame had better, perhaps, go and see him in his study.”

“Did he say anything?” asked Madame Camusot.

“No, madame; but none of us ever saw him look as he does; you’d think he was beginning on some illness; he is yellow, his features seem all distorted, and—”

Without waiting to hear more, Madame Camusot darted from her dressing-room, and ran to find her husband. She found the *juge d'instruction* [examin-

ing judge] sitting in an arm-chair, his legs stretched out before him, his head resting on the back of the chair, his hands hanging, his face pale, his eyes dull, precisely as though he were about to swoon.

“What is it, my dear friend?” cried his young wife, terrified.

“Ah! my poor Amélie, such a fatal event has happened! I tremble all over. Just fancy, the attorney-general—no, Madame de Sérizy—that is—I don’t know where to begin.”

“Begin at the end,” said Madame Camusot.

“Well, at the very moment when, in the Council chamber of the Première, Monsieur Popinot had put the last signature to the decree of *non-lieu* rendered on my report, which would have set Lucien de Rubempré at liberty,—in fact, the matter was all finished, the clerk was carrying away the record-book, and I was feeling safe out of the whole affair,—at that moment the chief-justice came in and saw the papers. ‘You are setting at liberty a dead man,’ he said. ‘Lucien de Rubempré has gone, to use Monsieur de Bonald’s expression, before his natural judge. He succumbed to a rush of blood to the head, an apoplexy.’ I breathed again, believing in some accident. ‘If I understand you,’ said Monsieur Popinot, ‘you mean an apoplexy of the Pichegru kind.’ ‘Messieurs,’ said the justice, ‘remember, if you please, that to all the world Lucien

de Rubempré died of the rupture of an aneurism.' We looked at each other. 'Great personages are mixed up in this deplorable affair. God grant for your sake, Monsieur Camusot, that Madame de Sérizy does not go mad from the shock. They have taken her home half-dead. I have just met the attorney-general, who is in great distress. You've got yourself into a hot place, Camusot,' he whispered in my ear. My dear Amélie, as I left the council chamber I could hardly walk. My legs trembled so that I dared not trust myself in the streets, and I went back to my office to rest awhile. Coquart, who was sorting the papers of that wretched examination, told me that a handsome woman had taken the Conciergerie by assault trying to save Lucien, and that when she saw him hanging by his cravat from a window in the Pistoles she fainted away. The idea that the manner in which I examined that young man — who, between ourselves, was undoubtedly guilty — had caused his suicide has so fastened upon me from the moment the news reached me that I feel like fainting away myself at every instant."

"Nonsense; are you going to imagine yourself a murderer because an accused man kills himself when you were just about to set him at liberty?" cried Madame Camusot. "Why! an examining judge at such times is like a general who has a horse killed under him, that's all."

“ Such comparisons, my dear, are only good as jests, and jesting is out of place here. The dead kills the living in this case. Lucien’s coffin carries off our hopes.”

“ Oh ! does it ? ” said Madame Camusot, sarcastically.

“ Yes, my career is at an end. I shall remain all my life a mere judge of the courts of the Seine. Monsieur de Granville was, even before this fatal event, very much dissatisfied with the course the examination had taken ; and what our chief-justice said to me just now proves to my mind that so long as Monsieur de Granville remains attorney-general, there will be no advancement for me.”

Advancement ! that is the terrible word, the idea, which in our day transforms the magistrate into a functionary.

Formerly the magistrate was from the beginning that which he was to continue to be. The three or four judgeships of the chamber sufficed for all ambitions in each parliament. The office of Councillor satisfied a de Brosse as it did a Molé, as well at Dijon as at Paris. This office, a fortune in itself, required a great fortune to maintain it. In Paris, outside of the Parliament, men of the long robe could aspire to only three distinguished positions : those of comptroller-general, keeper of the seals, and chancellor. In a lower sphere, the assistant judge of one of the inferior courts thought himself a

person sufficiently distinguished to be willing to stay in that post all his life. Compare the position of a councillor to the royal court of Paris, whose only fortune in 1829 was his salary, with that of a councillor to the Parliament in 1729. Great is the difference! In these days when money is made the universal social guarantee, magistrates are released from the obligation of possessing, as in former times, great fortunes; the consequence is that we see them deputies, peers of France, adding office to office, becoming judges and legislators, and borrowing importance from positions other than those from which alone they ought to derive their fame.

In short, magistrates think, in these days, of distinguishing themselves in order to obtain promotion, as men are promoted in the army or in diplomacy.

This thought, if it does not injure the independence of the magistrate, is at least too well-known, and its effects are too plainly seen, not to cause the magistracy to lose its majesty in public opinion. The salaries paid by the State make government employés of the priest and the magistrate. The grades to be attained develop ambition, ambition begets compliance toward power; moreover, modern equality puts the judge and the person arraigned on the same social level. Consequently, the two great columns of support to the social order — religion and the law — are depreciated in this

nineteenth century, in which we think we make such progress in all things.

“And pray, why should n’t you be promoted?” said Amélie Camusot.

She looked at her husband with a satirical air, for she felt the necessity of giving energy to the man who bore her ambition and on whom she was accustomed to play like an instrument.

“Why despair?” she continued, with a gesture that well depicted her indifference to the suicide of the prisoner. “This death will please two of Lucien’s enemies, Madame d’Espard and her cousin, Madame du Châtelet. Madame d’Espard is on the best of terms with the Keeper of the Seals. You can obtain, through her, an interview with his Excellency, and tell him, yourself, the secret of this affair. And then, if the minister of Justice is on your side, why need you fear your own chief-justice or the attorney-general?”

“But Monsieur and Madame de Sérizy!” cried the poor judge, “Madame de Sérizy, I tell you, has gone mad,—and gone mad through my blunder, they say.”

“Well, if she is mad, oh, judge of no judgment,” said Madame Camusot, laughing, “she can’t do you any harm. Come, tell me all the events of the day.”

“Ah!” replied Camusot, with a sigh, “just as I had finished examining the young man, and had got him to declare that the Spanish priest was really

Jacques Collin, the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse and Madame de Sérizy sent me, by a footman, a little note in which they requested me not to examine him. But it was all done."

"Have you lost your head?" said Amélie, "Sure as you are of your clerk, you might have called back Lucien, reassured him, and altered the examination."

"You are like Madame de Sérizy; that would be a mockery of justice," said Camusot, incapable of trifling with his profession. "Madame de Sérizy seized the examination-papers, and threw them into the fire."

"Ah! bravo! there's a woman indeed!" cried Madame Camusot.

"Madame de Sérizy told me she would blow up the Palais rather than let a young man who had stood well in her good graces and those of Madame de Maufrigneuse sit in the dock at the court of assizes beside a galley-slave."

"But, Camusot," said Amélie, unable to repress a smile of superiority, "your position is superb."

"Ah! superb indeed!"

"You have done your duty."

"Yes, but I've done it unluckily, and in spite of the jesuitical advice of Monsieur de Granville, who met on the Quai Malaquais — "

"This morning?"

"Yes, this morning."

“ What hour ? ”

“ Nine o’clock.”

“ Oh ! Camusot ! ” said Amélie, clasping her hands and wringing them, “ how often have I told you to be careful about everything. Good heavens ! it is not a man, it is a load of stone I drag after me. But, Camusot, don’t you see that if your attorney-general intercepted you, it was because he had something he wanted of you ? ”

“ Well, yes.”

“ And you did n’t understand him ! If you are so deaf as that, you will certainly stay an examining judge without examinations all the rest of your life. Have the sense to listen to me,” she said, making her husband, who began to answer her, hold his tongue. “ Do you think the affair ended ? ”

Camusot looked at his wife as peasants look at a juggler.

“ If the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse and the Comtesse de Sérizy have compromised themselves in this way,” she continued, “ you can have them both as your protectresses. Let us consider. Madame d’Espard will obtain for you an audience with the Keeper of the Seals ; you will tell him the secrets of the affair, and he will amuse the King with them ; all sovereigns like to see the other side of the tapestry, and know the real causes of the events the public gape at. From

that moment neither Monsieur de Sérizy nor the attorney-general need be feared."

"What a treasure of a woman you are!" cried the judge, recovering a little courage. "After all, I have ferreted out Jacques Collin; I'll send him to his deserts at the court of assizes; I'll unmask his crimes. Such an affair is a triumph for an examining judge."

"Camusot," said Amélie, pleased to see her husband recovering from the mental and physical prostration Lucien's suicide had caused him, "the chief-justice told you a while ago that you were in a hot place, but now you're jumping out of the frying-pan into the fire. My dear friend, you are blundering again."

The examining judge stood bolt upright looking at his wife in a sort of stupefaction.

"The King and the Keeper of the Seals," she went on, "may like very well to know the secrets of the affair, and at the same time be much displeased if the liberals should lay hold of the matter and drag before the bar of public opinion and the court of assizes, names of such importance as Sérizy and Maufrigneuse and Grandlieu,—in short, all those who are involved directly or indirectly in this affair."

"Ha! they are all in it! I hold them in the palm of my hand!" cried Camusot. He got up and stalked about his study, very much as Sganarelle does on the stage when he tries to get out of a scrape.

"Listen, Amélie," he continued, placing himself directly in front of his wife. "A circumstance recurs to my mind which seemed of slight importance at the time, but, placed as I now am, it may be of vital use to me. Recollect, my dearest, that this Jacques Collin is a colossus of shrewdness, dissimulation, and trickery ; a man of profound — ah ! what shall I call him ? — he's the Cromwell of the galleys ! I never in my life met with such a knave ; he almost baffled me ! But in criminal examinations a single thread which you happen to catch sight of will often give you the whole ball by which to find your way through the labyrinth of the darkest consciences or the best-concealed facts. When Jacques Collin saw me handling the letters seized at Lucien's house, the rascal gave those papers the glance of a man who wants to see if any other packet is among them, and he made a motion of satisfaction. That glance of a criminal looking for his treasure, that gesture which said 'I still hold my weapons,' made me understand a world of things. There are none but you women and prisoners and ourselves who can, in a single look, express whole scenes which reveal a complicated deception, like the key-words of a safe. A volume of suspicions are conceived in a moment. It is terrible ; it is life or death in a glance. 'That fellow has other letters in his possession,' thought I. Then the other points of the affair occupied my mind,

and I forgot the incident; for I then expected to confront the two men, and clear up this matter later. But we may now consider it as certain that Jacques Collin has put in some safe place, as these wretches always do, the most compromising letters of that handsome youth adored by so — ”

“ And you tremble, Camusot! Why, you will be chief-justice of the Royal courts far sooner than I thought!” cried Madame Camusot, her face radiant. “ Let us consider; you must act in a way to satisfy everybody, for the affair is evidently so serious that it may be *stolen* from us. Did n’t they take out of Popinot’s hands and give to you the proceedings in the case of the injunction applied for by Madame d’Espirard against her husband?” she asked, in reply to a gesture of amazement made by Camusot. “ Well, the attorney-general, who takes such a lively interest in the affairs of Monsieur and Madame de Sérizy, might carry the affair before the Royal courts, and put it into the hands of a counsellor with orders to make a fresh examination.”

“ *Ah ça!* my dear, where did you pick up such knowledge of criminal law?” cried Camusot. “ You know all; you are my master.”

“ Don’t you know that to-morrow morning Monsieur de Granville will be alarmed at the probable action of some liberal lawyer whom Jacques Collin will have no

difficulty in securing? You may be sure those ladies know their danger as well, or even better, than you. They will inform the attorney-general, who is already anxious lest the names of these great families should be involved with that of a galley-slave, through Lucien, the betrothed of Mademoiselle de Grandlieu, the lover of Esther, the friend of Madame de Maufrigneuse, and the cherished darling of Madame de Sérizy. You must manœuvre this matter in a way to conciliate the good-will of the attorney-general, the gratitude of Monsieur de Sérizy, that of Madame d'Espard, and the Comtesse du Châtelet; and at the same time you must strengthen the protection Madame de Maufrigneuse already gives you with that of the house of Grandlieu. As for me, I'll take charge of the Espard, Maufrigneuse, and Grandlieu part of the business. You must go tomorrow morning early to the attorney-general. Monsieur de Granville is a man who, they tell me, does n't live with his wife, he has a mistress; he is no saint, but a man like all the rest; he can be persuaded and seduced if you find his weak spot. Ask him for advice; show him the danger of the affair. In short, try to compromise yourselves in company, and you will — ”

“ I kiss your very footsteps! ” cried Camusot, interrupting his wife to catch her round the waist and press her to his heart. “ Amélie, you have saved me! ”

"It was I who towed you from Alençon to Mantes, and from Mantes to the courts of the Seine," replied Amélie. "Well, don't be uneasy; I mean to be the wife of the chief-justice in five years from now — only, my little man, think, and think long before you come to decisions. The business of a judge is not that of a fireman; the flames are not in your papers. You have time enough to reflect; therefore, in such a position as yours, blunders are inexcusable."

"The strength of my present position lies wholly in the identity of the Spanish priest with Jacques Collin," said the judge, after a long pause. "When once that identity is fully established, even though the Royal court might take cognizance of the case, it will remain an actual fact, the credit of which no one can take away from me. I'm like the children who tie a rattle to the cat's tail; no matter where the case is tried, Jacques Collin's chains will always clank."

"Bravo!" said Amélie.

"Besides, the attorney-general would rather come to an understanding with me who can alone lift this sword of Damocles from those heads of the faubourg Saint-Germain than with any other. But you don't know how difficult it will be to bring about that result. Just now the attorney-general, sitting in his office, agreed to take Jacques Collin for what he claims to be, — a canon of the Chapter of Toledo, Don Carlos Herrera; we de-

termined to admit his status as a diplomatic envoy, and to allow the Spanish embassy to have him. It was in consequence of this agreement that I released Lucien de Rubempré. To-morrow Messieurs de Rastignac and Bianchon were to be confronted with the so-called priest; but they would not have recognized Jacques Collin, whose last arrest took place in their presence ten years ago, in a common boarding-house, where he went by the name of Vautrin."

Silence reigned for a few moments while Madame Camusot reflected.

"Are you sure that he is Jacques Collin?" she asked.

"Quite sure," replied the judge, "and so is the attorney-general."

"Well, then, try, without showing the claws under your fur, to filch a credit from the Palais de Justice. If your convict is still in solitary confinement, go immediately to the director of the Conciergerie, and have him publicly identified. Instead of imitating children, imitate the ministers of police in despotic countries, who invent conspiracies against their sovereign to gain the credit of defeating them, and so make themselves necessary. Put the three families in danger, in order to have the glory of saving them."

"Ah, what luck!" cried Camusot; "my head was so troubled and worried that I forgot that circumstance.

The order to put Jacques Collin in the Pistoles was taken by Coquart to Monsieur Gault, the director of the Conciergerie. Now, Bibi-Lupin, Jacques Collin's greatest enemy, has transferred three criminals, who know him well, from La Force to the Conciergerie. When he comes down to-morrow into the *préau*, the yard where the prisoners take their exercise, a terrible scene is expected to take place."

"Why terrible?"

"Jacques Collin, my dear, is the trusted depositary of the fortunes of the convicts at the galleys, which amount to a considerable sum of money. He has, they suspect, wasted them upon Lucien, and these three men will call him to account for it. Bibi-Lupin tells me there will be an assault upon him which will require the interference of the jailers, and the truth will be discovered. Jacques Collin's life will be in danger. By going to the Palais very early, I shall be able to draw up the report of his identity before it is generally known."

"Ah! if his comrades relieve you of him, you will be thought a most capable man! Don't go to see Monsieur de Granville; let him come to you. Await him with that formidable weapon in your hand. It is a cannon pointed at the three most distinguished families of the court and peerage. Be bold; propose to Monsieur de Granville to rid you of Jacques Collin by

transferring him to La Force. I will go myself to the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse and get her to take me to the Grandlieus. Perhaps I shall also see Monsieur de Sérizy. Trust to me to ring the alarm all round. Write me a line to let me know the moment the Spanish priest is recognized to be Jacques Collin. Arrange your affairs so that you can leave the Palais at any moment, for I shall get an appointment for you with the Keeper of the Seals. Perhaps he may be at Madame d'Espard's."

Camusot stood, planted on his legs, in an attitude of admiration which made his clever Amélie smile.

"Come, let's go to dinner and be gay!" she said. "See! we have been only two years in Paris, and here you are on the high-road to be a councillor in a few months. Thence, my dear, to the chief-justiceship there is but the distance of some service rendered in a political matter."

This private conference shows to what a point the actions and words of Jacques Collin affected the honor of families in the midst of whom he had placed and maintained his deceased protégé.

II.

THE MAN IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT, AND IN THE SOLITUDE OF HIS SOUL.

LUCIEN's death and the invasion of the Conciergerie by Madame de Sérizy had produced such disturbance to the running-gear of that machine that the director had forgotten to release the Spanish priest from the secret cells and place him in the *pistoles*.

Though there is more than one instance in judiciary annals of the death of an accused person during the preliminary examination of a case, it is sufficiently rare to force the warders, clerks, and the director himself, out of the usual calmness with which they perform their duties. And yet, to their minds, the great event was not that a fine young man was suddenly a corpse, but that a wrought-iron bar at their gateway had been broken by the delicate hands of a fashionable woman. No sooner, therefore, had the attorney-general, Comte Octave de Bauvan, and the Comte de Sérizy, carried off the fainting countess in the latter's carriage, than the director and all his assistants, together with Monsieur Lebrun, the prison doctor (called to certify the young man's death, in company with the "death doctor" of

the arrondissement in which Lucien lived), collected about the iron gate to examine it.

We may mention here that in Paris the “death doctor” is a physician whose business it is in each arrondissement to verify all deaths, and examine into their causes.

With the rapidity of judgment which distinguished him, Monsieur de Granville had seen that it was necessary, for the honor of the three families concerned, that Lucien’s death should be certified to in the arrondissement of the Quai Malaquais, where he had lived ; and that the funeral procession should proceed from his own house to the parish church, Saint-Germain des Prés, where the services were to be held. Monsieur de Chargebœuf, Monsieur de Granville’s secretary, sent by him, had orders to that effect. The removal of Lucien’s body from the prison to his late home was to take place during the night. To all the world, therefore, Lucien would seem to have died in his own house, where his friends were invited to assemble to attend his funeral.

Therefore, at the moment when Camusot, with a mind relieved, was sitting down to table with his ambitious better-half, the director of the Conciergerie, the prison doctor, and the death doctor were standing outside the iron railing, deplored the fragility of iron bars and discussing the extraordinary strength of nervous women.

"No one knows," said the prison doctor to Monsieur Gault, the director, "what amazing nervous force there is in persons violently excited by passion. Mathematics and dynamics are without signs or calculations by which to estimate that force. Only yesterday I was witness of a magnetic experiment which made me shudder, and which explains to a certain extent the extraordinary physical power displayed by that little woman."

"Tell me about it," said Monsieur Gault, "for I have the weakness to be much interested in magnetism without believing in it; I must say it puzzles me."

"A magnetizing physician, for we have men in the faculty who believe in magnetism," continued Monsieur Lebrun, "proposed to experiment on me a phenomenon which he described and which I doubted. Curious to see in my own person one of those strange nervous crises, by which they prove the existence of magnetism, I consented. This is what happened,—and I should like to know what the Academy of Medicine would say, if each member, one after the other, submitted his limbs to an influence which left no possible chance for incredulity. My old friend— But I should tell you," said Doctor Lebrun, beginning a parenthesis, "that this doctor is an old man, persecuted by the Faculty for his opinions, which are those of Mesmer. He is over seventy years of age, and his name is Bou-

vard. He may be called the patriarch of the doctrine of animal magnetism. I am like a son to the old man, and I owe my profession to him. So, then, this worthy Bouvard proposed to prove to me that the nervous force called into action by a magnetizer is not infinite, for man is ruled by definite laws, but that it proceeds from forces of nature whose essential principles escape calculation. ‘If,’ he said to me, ‘you are willing to put your hand into the grasp of a somnambulist who in her waking state has not the strength to squeeze beyond a certain appreciable force, you will find that in the condition foolishly called somnambulic, her fingers have the faculty of acting like the nippers of a locksmith.’ Well, monsieur, when I did give my wrist into the grasp of a woman, not *asleep*, — Bouvard objects to that expression, — but *isolated*, and when the old man told her to press my wrist with all her force, I was compelled to beg her to release me, for the blood was beginning to burst from my fingers’ ends. Here, look at the bracelet I shall wear for the next three months.”

“The deuce!” cried Monsieur Gault, looking at a circular discoloration very much like that produced by a burn.

“My dear Gault,” said the doctor, “if I had had my flesh held in an iron band which was tightened by the vise of a locksmith, I could not have felt that

metal circle more severely than I did the fingers of that woman. Her grasp was that of steel, and I am convinced she could have crushed the bones and have separated the hand from the wrist. This pressure began in an almost imperceptible manner, continued without relaxing to gather force, until at last a tourniquet could have had no closer grip than the woman's hand thus changed into an instrument of torture. It seems to me to prove that, under the empire of passion, which is will concentrated on one point and attaining to incalculable volumes of animal strength (as do all the various species of electrical powers), it proves, I say, that man can bring his whole vitality, either for attack or for resistance, into any given organ. That little woman had, under the pressure of despair, put her whole vital strength into her wrists."

"It takes a devilish deal to break an iron bar," said the head jailer, shaking his head.

"There must have been a straw in it," remarked Monsieur Gault.

"As for me," said the doctor, "I no longer venture to assign limits to nervous force. It is that by which mothers save their children magnetize lions, or go through flames, or walk on ridge-poles where cats can hardly crawl, and bear the tortures of a difficult child-birth. In it is the secret of attempts made by prisoners and convicts to regain their liberty. I tell you

no one yet knows the ultimate reach of the vital forces ; they share the power of Nature herself, and we draw from them as from hidden reservoirs."

"Monsieur," said a warder, whispering in the director's ear, as he was about to accompany the doctor to the outer gate of the Conciergerie, "Number Two, in the solitaries, says he is ill, and wants the doctor. He pretends he is dying," added the man.

"Is it true?" asked the director.

"Well, his throat rattles."

"It is five o'clock, and I've not dined," said the doctor. "However, here I am on the spot; come, let us go to him."

"Number Two, in the solitaries, is that very Spanish priest suspected of being Jacques Collin," said the director to the doctor. "He is one of the accused persons in the affair in which that poor young man was implicated."

"I saw him this morning," said the doctor. "Monsieur Camusot sent for me to examine the physical condition of the fellow, who, between ourselves, is perfectly well, and might make his fortune as a Hercules among a troop of acrobats."

"He may be trying to kill himself," said Monsieur Gault. "Come, let us both go to the solitaries; in fact, I ought to go and transfer the man to the *pistoles*. Monsieur Camusot has released this singular nondescript from close confinement."

Jacques Collin, nicknamed *Trompe-la-Mort* in the world of the galleys, and to whom we shall henceforth give no other name than his own, had been, from the moment of his re-incarceration by Camusot's order, in the grasp of an anxiety he had never before known in the course of a life marked by many crimes, by three escapes from the galleys, and two sentences in the court of assizes. This man, in whom the life, force, mind, and passions of the galleys are summed up, who presents the very highest expression of that underworld, was yet astonishingly fine in his attachment, worthy of the canine race, to the being he had made his friend. Infamous, horrible, and deserving of condemnation on all sides, this absolute devotion to his idol does render him so truly interesting that our study of his past career would be unfinished, incomplete, if the *dénouement* of this criminal existence did not follow that of Lucien de Rubempré. The little spaniel dead, we cannot but ask ourselves what became of his terrible companion, the lion.

In real life, as in social life, facts are so fatally interlocked with other facts that none can be taken and the others left. The water of a river forms a species of liquid floor; there is no flood, however raging it may be, to whatever height it may rise, whose foaming crests will not sink beneath the volume of the water, which is stronger in the rapidity of its course than the

rebellious whirlpools which it meets and sweeps away. Perhaps it is desirable to consider the pressure of the Social power on that whirlpool called Vautrin, to note the spot at which the rebel vortex sank, and learn the end of a man who was truly diabolical, and yet was fastened to humanity by love,— so hard is it for that sacred principle to perish, even in a gangrened heart.

The ignoble convict, in materializing the poetic idea wooed by so many poets, by Moore, Byron, Mathurin, Canalis (that of a demon possessing an angel drawn to hell to refresh him with the dews of paradise),— Jacques Collin, if we have really penetrated that heart of iron, had renounced self for seven years past. His powerful faculties, absorbed in Lucien, were exercised for Lucien only ; he lived in his progress, his loves, his ambition. For him, Lucien was his visible soul.

Trompe-la-Mort dined at the Grandlieus, glided into the boudoir of great ladies, loved Esther, vicariously. He saw in Lucien a Jacques Collin, young, beautiful, noble, attaining to the rank of an ambassador.

Trompe-la-Mort had realized the German superstition of the DOUBLE through a phenomenon of mental paternity which will be understood by those women who in the course of their lives having loved truly have felt their soul passing into the soul of the man they loved ; who have lived of his life, noble or infamous, happy or unhappy, obscure or famous ; who

have felt, in spite of distance, a pain in their leg if his was wounded ; and who, to sum all up, have no need to hear that he has proved unfaithful in order to know it.

When returned to his solitary cell, Jacques Collin's thought was :—

“ They are questioning the young one ! ”

He shuddered, — he who could strike as another man drinks.

“ Has he seen those women ? Will they warn him ? Has my aunt been able to find those damned females ? Those duchesses, those countesses, have they taken proper steps ? Have they stopped the examination ? Has Lucien received my letter ? If fate wills that he be examined, how will he *carry himself* ? Ah, poor boy ! it is I who have brought him to this ! That brigand of a Paccard, and that sneak Europe, got us into this mess by filching the seven hundred and fifty thousand francs which Nucingen gave Esther. Those villains knocked us over at the very last step ; but they 'll pay dear for it ! One day more, and Lucien was rich, and married to Clotilde de Grandlieu. Esther was no longer in my way. Lucien loved that girl too well, and there 's no loving a sheet-anchor like Clotilde. Ah ! the young one would then have been all mine. And now, only to think that our fate depends on a look, on a tinge of color in Lucien's face before that

Camusot, who sees all, and, fool as he is, has the slyness of a judge. I saw the look he gave me when I glanced at those letters; he detected that I could expose those women if I chose."

And so the monologue went on for three hours. The agony was so great that it got the better of that creature of iron and vitriol. Jacques Collin, whose brain was fired almost to madness, felt such devouring thirst that he drank, without observing that he did so, all the water contained in two buckets, which, with a wooden bedstead, form the whole furniture of a solitary-cell.

"If he loses his head, what will become of him? For the poor boy has n't the force of a Théodore!" he thought, as he flung himself on the camp bedstead, which was like that of a guard-room.

One word here about this Théodore whom Jacques Collin remembered in this crucial moment. Théodore Calvi, a young Corsican, condemned to the galleys for life, for eleven murders before he was eighteen years of age, thanks to certain influence purchased with gold, had been Jacques Collin's chain companion in 1819 and 1820. The last escape of Jacques Collin, one of his ablest performances (he left the galleys dressed as a gendarme conducting Théodore Calvi as a prisoner before the commissary), had taken place at Rochefort where the convicts die in shoals, and where the authorities hoped these two dangerous characters would soon

end their days. Escaping together, they were forced to separate immediately. Théodore, recaptured, was returned to the galleys. Jacques Collin, after reaching Spain and transforming himself into Carlos Herrera, was on his way back to Paris, when he met Lucien on the banks of the Charente.

Life with Lucien, a youth free of all criminality, who had only peccadilloes on his conscience, rose to the mind of the escaping convict like the sun of a summer's day; whereas, with Théodore, Jacques Collin could see no other ending but the scaffold, after a series of inevitable crimes.

The idea of some misfortune caused by Lucien's weakness, who was likely to lose his head under the trial of solitary confinement, took enormous proportions in Jacques Collin's brain. Dwelling on the possibility of a catastrophe, his eyes filled with tears, — a phenomenon, which since his infancy had never been genuinely produced in him.

"I've a horse-fever on me," he said to himself, "and perhaps, if I get the doctor here and offer him a round sum, he will help me to communicate with Lucien."

Just then the jailer brought in his dinner.

"It is useless, my lad," he said; "I can't eat. Tell the director of this prison to send me the doctor; I feel so ill that I think my last hour has come."

Hearing the guttural sounds of a rattle, with which

the convict accompanied these words, the jailer nodded his head and went away. Jacques Collin fastened madly upon this hope; but when he saw the doctor enter his cell accompanied by the director, he felt that his scheme had miscarried, and coldly awaited the result of the visit, holding out his pulse to the doctor.

“Monsieur has a fever,” said the doctor, to Monsieur Gault, “but it is the fever we find in nearly all accused persons, and which,” he whispered in the ear of the false priest, “is to me the sign of some guilt.”

At this moment the director, to whom the attorney-general had given the letter written by Lucien to Jacques Collin for transmission to the latter, left the cell to get it, leaving the doctor with the prisoner, in charge of the jailer.

“Monsieur,” said Jacques Collin to the doctor, seeing the jailer outside the door, and being unable to explain to himself the departure of the director, “I should n’t consider a matter of thirty thousand francs, if I could be enabled to send five lines to Lucien de Rubempré.”

“I will not steal your money,” replied the doctor, “No one on earth can communicate with that young man.”

“No one?” said Jacques Collin, bewildered. “Why not?”

“Because he has hanged himself.”

Never tigress robbed of her cubs made the jungle of India resound with a more awful cry than that which burst from Jacques Collin. He rose to his feet as the tigress on her paws, and cast a flaming look upon the doctor like the lightning when it strikes, then suddenly he dropped back upon the camp-bed, saying, "Oh! my son!"

"Poor man!" exclaimed the doctor, moved by this terrible struggle of nature.

In truth, that explosion was followed by such complete prostration that the words "Oh! my son!" were like a murmur.

"Is he, too, going to slip through our fingers?" asked the jailer.

"It is not possible," said Jacques Collin, raising himself and looking at the two witnesses of this scene with an eye without flame or warmth. "You are mistaken, it was not he. You saw wrong. A man cannot hang himself in solitary confinement. Look! could I hang myself here? All Paris shall answer to me for that life? God owes it to me!"

The jailer and the doctor were bewildered in their turn,—they, whom nothing for many a year had been able to surprise. Monsieur Gault came in, holding Lucien's letter in his hand. On seeing the director, Jacques Collin, exhausted by the violence of that explosion of grief, seemed to calm himself.

"Here is a letter which the attorney-general charged me to give you ; he allows you to receive it unopened," said Monsieur Gault.

"Is it from Lucien ? asked Jacques Collin.

"Yes, monsieur."

"That proves that this young man —"

"Is dead," said the director. "Even if the physician had been on the spot he could not have saved him. The young man is dead, there, — in one of the *pistoles*."

"May I see him with my own eyes ?" asked Jacques Collin, timidly. "Will you give a father freedom to mourn his son ?"

"Yes ; you may, if you like, take his room. I have orders to transfer you to one of the *pistoles* ; you are no longer in solitary confinement, monsieur."

The prisoner's eyes, devoid of warmth and life, moved slowly from the director to the doctor. Jacques Collin questioned them ; he seemed to fear some trap, and hesitated to leave the cell.

"If you wish to see the body," said the doctor, "you have no time to lose. It is to be removed to-night."

"If you have children, messieurs," said Jacques Collin, "you will comprehend my imbecility. I can hardly see. The blow is to me far more than death ; but you cannot know what I mean. You are not fath-

ers, or if you are, only in one way ; I am a mother, too. I, I am mad, — I feel it."

By following passages the inflexible doors of which open only for the director, it is possible to go in a very short time from the solitary-cells to the *pistoles*. The two lines of cells are separated by a subterranean corridor, formed by two thick walls which support the arches on which the gallery of the Palais de Justice, called the Galerie Marchande, rests. So that Jacques Collin, accompanied by the jailer, who took him by the arm, preceded by the director and followed by the doctor, was only a few moments in reaching the cell where Lucien lay. They had placed him on a bed.

At the sight, the convict fell upon the body, clinging to it with a grip of despair, the strength and passionate movement of which made the three spectators shudder.

"There," said the doctor, in a low voice to the director, "is an example of what I was saying to you. See ! the man will crush that body, and you know what a dead body is ; it is stone."

"Leave me here," said Jacques Collin, in a voice that was almost extinct. "I have not long to see him ; they will take him from me to — "

He stopped, unable to say "bury."

"You will let me keep something of my dear child ? Have the kindness, monsieur," he said to the doctor,

"to cut me, yourself, a few locks of his hair, for I cannot."

"Surely that must be his son," said the doctor.

"I doubt it," said the director, with a thoughtful air which threw the doctor into a reverie.

The director told the jailer to leave the prisoner alone in the cell, and to cut off some locks of hair from the young man's head before the body was removed.

At half-past five o'clock in the month of May it is easy to read a letter in the Conciergerie, even behind the bars and iron network which darken the windows. There, Jacques Collin, holding Lucien's hand, read that terrible letter.

No man has been found who could hold a piece of ice in his hand, grasping it in his palm, for ten minutes. Its cold would affect the sources of life with deadly rapidity. But the effect of such terrible cold, acting like a poison, is scarcely comparable to that produced upon the soul by the stiff and icy hand of a corpse held in the same way. Death speaks then to Life; it tells black secrets, which kill many feelings. And to change our feelings, is not that to die?

As we re-read, with Jacques Collin, Lucien's letter, it will be seen what it was to this man,—a cup of poison: —

To the Abbé Carlos Herrera :

MY DEAR ABBÉ,—I have received nothing but benefits from you, and I have betrayed you. This involuntary ingratitude kills me, and when you read these lines I shall no longer exist,—you are no longer here to save me.

You gave me full right, in case I found an advantage in it, to sacrifice you, and throw you away like the end of a cigar; but I have sacrificed you foolishly. To get myself out of difficulty, misled by the captious questioning of the examining judge, I, your spiritual son, whom you adopted, went over to the side of those who wish at any cost to destroy you by discovering an identity (which I know to be impossible) between you and a French criminal. All is over.

Between a man of your power and me, of whom you have tried to make a greater person than I could be, there should be no silly sentiment at the moment of our final parting. You have wished to make me powerful and famous; you have flung me into the gulf of suicide—that is all. I have long seen its vertigo approaching me.

There is, as you once said, a posterity of Cain, and one of Abel. Cain, in the grand drama of humanity, is Opposition. You are descended from Adam by that line, into which the devil has continued to blow his flame, the first sparks of which were cast on Eve. Among the demons of this descent some appear, from time to time, of terrible vigor, of vast organization, combining all human forces, and resembling those rampant animals of the desert whose life requires the great spaces in which they are found. These men are dangerous to society, as lions would be dangerous in Normandy: they must have food; they devour common men, and suck the gold of fools; even their games are so

perilous that they end by killing the poor dog of whom they make a companion, an idol. When God wills it, these mysterious beings are named Moses, Attila, Charlemagne, Robespierre, Napoleon; but when he lets a generation of these gigantic instruments rust in the depths of ocean they are nothing more than Pugatcheff, Fouché, Louvel, and Carlos Herrera. Gifted with a mighty power over tender souls, they attract and knead them. 'Tis grand, 't is fine in its way; 't is the poisonous plant with glowing colors that entices children in a wood; 't is the poesy of Evil. Men like you should live in lairs and never leave them. You made me live within the circle of this stupendous life, and I have had my fill of existence. Therefore I withdraw my head from the Gordian knot of your policy to fasten it in the running noose of my cravat.

To repair my fault, I transmit to the attorney-general a formal retraction of my testimony. You will see to its being of service to you.

In pursuance of my will you will receive, Monsieur l'abbé, the sums belonging to your Order which you spent, most imprudently, on me, in consequence of the paternal affection you have always shown me.

Farewell, then, farewell, grandiose statue of Evil and corruption; farewell, you, who in the path of Good would have been greater than Ximenes, greater than Richelieu. You have kept your promises; I find myself once more on the banks of the Charente, after owing to you the enchantments of a dream; but, unfortunately, it is not the river of mine own country in which I was about to drown the peccadilloes of my youth,— it is the Seine, and my pool is a cell in the Conciergerie.

Do not regret me. My contempt for you is equal to my admiration.

LUCIEN.

At one o'clock in the morning, when they came to remove the body, Jacques Collin was found kneeling beside Lucien's bed, the letter on the floor beside him, dropped, no doubt, as the suicide drops the pistol which has killed him; but the miserable man was still holding the stiffened hand of him he had loved so well; he held it pressed between his own clasped hands, and was praying God.

When they saw him thus, the jailers stopped for an instant; he resembled one of those stone figures kneeling for eternity on the tombs of the middle ages. The man, with eyes as clear as those of tigers, and rigid with an awful immobility, so impressed the minds of those men that they asked him gently to rise.

"Why?" he said, timidly. The audacious Trompe-la-Mort had become as humble as a little child.

The director showed this sight to Monsieur de Chargeboeuf, who, filled with respect for such a sorrow, explained to the prisoner Monsieur de Granville's orders relating to the funeral services and the interment, adding that it was essential to transfer the body to Lucien's home on the Quai Malaquais, where the clergy were then assembled to watch it for the rest of the night.

"I recognize his great soul in that," said the convict, in a sad voice. "Tell him, monsieur, that he may count upon my gratitude. Yes, I am able to render him great services. Do not forget those words;

they are, to him, of much importance. Ah! monsieur, there come strange changes in the heart of a man when he has wept for seven hours over a child like that. I shall never see him again!"

Looking once more at Lucien with the eyes of a mother from whom they are rending her son, Jacques Collin sank back upon himself. As he watched them take the body, so dreadful a moan escaped his breast that the porters hastened to be gone.

The secretary of the attorney-general and the director of the prison had already withdrawn from the painful sight.

What had become of that iron nature in which decision and resolution equalled the glance of those eyes in rapidity; in whom thought and action sprang forth with a single flash; whose nerves, inured by three escapes, three periods at the galleys, had attained to the metallic strength of the nerves of savages? Iron yields to reiterated striking, or to a certain continuance of pressure; its impenetrable molecules, purified by man and made homogeneous, segregate, and, without being in fusion, the metal has not the same power of resistance. Blacksmiths, locksmiths, tool-makers, all men who work constantly in this metal, express that condition by a technical word. "The iron is retted," they say, appropriating a term which belongs properly to flax or hemp, the fibre of which is disintegrated by

retting. Well, the human soul, or, if you choose to say so, the triple energy of body, heart, and mind, is found in a condition analogous to that of iron as the result of repeated shocks. It is then with men as it is with flax or iron: they are "retted." Science, the law, and the public, attribute a hundred causes to some terrible catastrophe on a railway by the rupture of an iron bar, as in that terrible example at Bellevue; but no one pays attention to the true experts in this matter, the smiths, who all employ the same expression, "The iron was retted." This danger cannot be foreseen. The metal looks the same, be it disintegrating, or be it resistant.

It is in this state that confessors and examining judges often find great criminals. The terrible emotions caused by the court of assizes and by the "toilette" almost always bring even the strongest natures to what may be called a dislocation of the nervous system. Confessions escape the lips till then most firmly closed; the stoutest hearts give way, and this—strange fact!—at the moment when confession becomes useless, when this sudden weakness merely tears from the guilty man the mask of innocence by which he disturbs the mind of justice, for that is always uneasy when the condemned man dies without confession.

Napoleon experienced this dissolution of all human forces at Waterloo.

III.

THE PRÉAU OF THE CONCIERGERIE, WITH AN ESSAY PHILOSOPHIC, LINGUISTIC, AND LITERARY, ON THIEVES' LATIN AND THIEVES.

AT eight in the morning, when the warder of the *pistoles* entered the room where Jacques Collin was now confined, he found him pale and calm, like a man who had recovered strength through some violent determination.

"This is the hour for exercise," said the jailer. "You have been shut up for three days; if you would like to get some air, and walk in the *préau*, you can do so."

Jacques Collin, absorbed in his thoughts, taking no interest in himself, regarding himself as a garment without a body, as a rag, did not suspect the snare set for him by Bibi-Lupin, nor the vital consequences of his appearance in the *préau*. The unhappy man left his cell mechanically, and passed along the corridor which skirts the cells that are built into the cornice of the splendid arcades of the palace of the kings of France, on which rests the so-called gallery of Saint-

Louis. This corridor joins that of the *pistoles*; and it is a circumstance not unworthy of remark that the cell in which Louvel, the murderer of the Duc de Berry, was confined, is situated in the angle formed by the junction of the two corridors. Under the pretty office in the Tour Bonbec is a corkscrew staircase by which the prisoners in all these cells go and come to and from the *préau*.

All accused persons, also indicted persons who are waiting for trial before the court of assizes, and those who have already appeared there, in short, all the prisoners in the Conciergerie, except those in solitary confinement, walk in this narrow unpaved space for several hours of the day, and more particularly in the early summer mornings. This yard, the antechamber to the scaffold or the galleys, leads to those institutions at one end, while at the other it is still connected with social existence through the gendarme, the office of the examining judge, and the court of assizes. It is even more petrifying to behold than the scaffold. The scaffold may be a pedestal from which to rise to heaven; but the *préau* is all the infamies of earth united, and with no outlet!

The *préau* is a *préau*, whether it be that of La Force, or Poissy, or Melun, or Sainte-Pélagie. Its facts are identically the same, even to the color of the walls, their height, and the space inclosed. This study of

Parisian customs would be incomplete without a more exact description of this species of Pandemonium.

Under the strong arches which support the Chamber of the Court of Appeals is (at the fourth arch) a stone which, it is said, served Saint-Louis as a table from which to distribute alms, but which in our day is used as a stand, at which are sold certain supplies to the prisoners. Therefore, as soon as the *préau* is opened in the morning, the latter all group themselves about this stone of luxuries such as brandy, rum, and eatables.

The first two arches on this side of the *préau* (which faces the magnificent Byzantine gallery, sole remains of the palace of Saint-Louis) are occupied by the parlor where prisoners and their lawyers may confer. This parlor, placed at the end of the immense entrance hall of the Conciergerie and lighted from the *préau* by recessed windows high above the floor, has lately been supplied with other windows opening to the entrance-hall, so that the conferences which take place in that parlor may be watched. This innovation was rendered necessary by the cajoleries practised by certain pretty women on their legal defenders. In this room take place such interviews as police regulations permit between prisoners and their friends.

We can now imagine what the *préau* must be to the two hundred prisoners of the Conciergerie: it is their garden,—a garden without trees, or earth, or flowers,

but still, their place of relaxation, *their préau*. The gratings of the parlor, and the stone of Saint-Louis constitute their only possible communication with the outer world.

The moments spent in the *préau* are the only ones during which the prisoners can have fresh air and company. In other prisons the men are collected in workshops, but in the Conciergerie they are not allowed any occupation, unless they are in the *pistoles*; and there, the drama of the court of assizes usually preoccupies their mind, for they are only placed there while undergoing examination or awaiting sentence.

This yard presents a horrifying spectacle; it cannot be imagined,—it must be seen. In the first place, we find, in a space about one hundred and thirty feet long by one hundred feet wide, over one hundred individuals either suspected or indicted criminals, who are therefore not the élite of society. These miserable creatures, who, for the most part, belong to the lowest classes, are badly clothed and their countenances are ignoble or shocking; a criminal from the upper social classes is happily seldom seen here. Peculation, forgery, or fraudulent bankruptcy, the only crimes which would bring the upper classes to the Conciergerie are confined in the *pistoles*, and such prisoners seldom or never choose to leave their cells.

This place of exercise, enclosed by noble and for-

midable black walls with fortified towers on the quay, watched by careful keepers, and occupied by a throng of ignoble criminals, all distrustful of one another, is sad enough to glance at superficially, but it is terrifying when you find yourself the centre of looks of hatred, curiosity, despair, as you stand face to face with those dishonored beings. No joy there! all is gloomy, the place and its inhabitants; all is silent, walls and consciences. All is peril to these unfortunates; they dare not trust each other,—unless it be through friendships as sinister as the galleys of which they are the product. The police, known to be ever near, corrupt the atmosphere and poison all things to their minds, even the pressure of a fellow-convict's hand. The criminal who meets an accomplice is ignorant whether the latter has not confessed in secret to escape his own penalty. This lack of security, this fear of the *mouton* spoils the already too treacherous liberty of the *préau*.¹ In prison argot, the *mouton* [sheep]

¹ The difficulty of rendering this chapter in English is great. It cannot be translated. The following method is therefore employed. The word *argot* is left in the French, because the word, "slang," does not do it justice; in the present connection "thieves' latin," is its best equivalent. *Argot* is a language of expression; keenly intelligent, full of meaning and experience. Where its meaning can be given by a literal, word-for-word translation into English, this has been done. In other places the French words have been left. No attempt has been made to render French argot in its equivalent of English slang. A dictionary of argot is

is a spy, who appears there under the accusation of some dangerous crime, and whose aim it is to be taken for an *ami* [friend]. The word *ami* signifies in *argot* a robber emeritus, a consummate thief, who has long broken with society, who means to be a thief all his life, and to remain faithful under all circumstances to the laws of the *haute pègre*. *Pègre* is the caste of thieves. It is divided into two classes, the *haute* and the *basse pègre*. The first is an association of the oldest and most accomplished criminals ; they commit none but great robberies and despise ordinary thieves.

Crime and madness have a certain similitude. Observing prisoners of the Conciergerie in the *préau*, and observing patients in the garden of an insane asylum, are much the same thing. They all avoid each other as they walk about ; they cast glances that are strange or ferocious, according to the thoughts in their minds at the moment, but never gay or earnest ; they either know or they fear one another. The expectation of a conviction, anxiety, possibly remorse, give to these denizens of a *préau* the uneasy, haggard look of madmen. Consummate criminals alone have an assured manner which resembles the tranquillity of an honest life and the sincerity of a pure conscience.

very amusing and instructive reading ; such as the "Dictionnaire Historique d'Argot," par M. Lorédan Larchey, dernière édition, E. Dentu, Paris. — TR.

A man of the middle and upper classes being an exception (shame retaining in their cells those whom crime has sent there), it follows that the occupants of the *préau* are usually dressed as working-men. Blouses, linen caps, and velveteen jackets predominate. These coarse or dirty costumes, in keeping with the common or threatening faces and the brutal manners (somewhat cowed, perhaps, by the gloomy thoughts that assail all prisoners, even the silence of the place), do their share in striking terror or disgust to the mind of the visitor for whom some high influence has obtained the very rare privilege of studying the Conciergerie on the spot.

Just as the sight of a museum of anatomy, where loathsome diseases are represented in wax, has brought young men to resolutions of chastity, so the sight of the Conciergerie and the aspect of the *préau*, swarming with guests doomed to the scaffold, the galleys, or some other degrading punishment, inspires fear of human justice in those who do not dread divine justice however loudly it may speak to the conscience. Such persons issue from that sight honest men, and stay so for a long time.

As several of the criminals in the *préau* at the moment when Jacques Collin came down to it are the actors in a crucial scene in Trompe-la-Mort's life, it is not superfluous to describe a few of the principal figures of this terrible assemblage.

There, as everywhere that men congregate, there, as in schools and colleges, reigns physical force, and mental and moral force. There, too, as at the galleys, criminality forms the aristocracy. He whose head is in danger takes precedence of all the rest. The *préau*, as we can readily believe, is the criminal's law-school; it is even a court where cases are tried. An occasional amusement consists in acting over again a drama of the court of assizes, with judge and jury, an official of the State, and lawyers, ending with a verdict on the case. This horrible farce is almost always played on the occasion of a celebrated crime. At the present moment a great criminal trial was going on before the court of assizes,—namely, the shocking murder of a couple named Crottat, formerly farmers, the father and mother of the notary of that name, who were hoarding, as this horrible affair proved, over eight hundred thousand francs in gold.

One of the persons concerned in this two-fold murder was the celebrated Dannepon, otherwise called La Pouraille, a released galley-slave, who for the last five years had escaped the most active police search for fresh crimes, thanks to seven or eight aliases, and as many different lives. The disguises of this villain were so perfect that he even underwent, without discovery, two years' imprisonment in the name of Del-souq, one of his pupils, a celebrated thief, who never,

in his many crimes, got beyond the jurisdiction of the correctional police. La Pouraille was now, five years after his release from the galleys, at his third murder. The certainty of his condemnation to death, not less than his reputed possession of enormous booty, made this man an object of awe and admiration to the other prisoners ; for not one penny of the stolen money had been recovered. The reader will doubtless remember, in spite of the public events of July, 1830, the excitement caused in Paris by this bold crime, comparable only to the theft of the coins of the Bibliothèque,—in public estimation, at least, for the unfortunate tendency of our day is to measure crime by the amount of the money stolen.

La Pouraille, a spare and lean little man, with a weasel face, about forty-five years of age, a celebrity in each of the three galleys which he had inhabited successively from the time he was nineteen years old, knew Jacques Collin intimately, and we shall presently explain why. Transferred from La Force to the Conciergerie with La Pouraille on the previous day were two other former galley-slaves, who had instantly recognized and made known in the *préau* the dangerous royalty of this *ami* foredoomed to the scaffold. One of these convicts, a released galley-slave named Sélérier, alias l'Auvergnat, le Père Ralleau, le Rouleur, but known to the society of the *haute pègre* as Fil-de-Soie,

a nickname due to the cleverness with which he could slip out of the dangers of his profession, was also one of Trompe-la-Mort's former comrades. But Trompe-la-Mort had suspected him of playing a double part, of being in the counsels of the *haute pègre* and also in the employ of the police, so that he attributed his own arrest in 1819, at the Maison Vauquer, to this man. (See *Père Goriot*.) Sélérier, whom we will call Fille-de-Soie, as we shall call Dannepon La Pouraille, was implicated in certain robberies, in which, however, no blood had been shed; he was about, in all probability, to be returned to the galleys on a twenty years' sentence. The third convict, named Riganson, formed, with his concubine, called La Biffe, one of the most redoubtable households of the *haute pègre*. Riganson, whose relations with law and justice had been delicate from his earliest years, was commonly known as Le Biffon. Le Biffon was the male of La Biffe.

A digression is here necessary; for Jacques Collin's entrance into the *préau*, his appearance in the midst of his enemies, so cleverly arranged by Bibi-Lupin at the instigation of the examining-judge, and the curious scenes which came of it, would be incomprehensible to the reader without certain explanations on the world of the galleys, its laws, its customs,—above all, its language, the dreadful poesy of which is an indispensable feature of this portion of our tale. First, therefore, a

few words on the language of sharpers, swindlers, thieves, and murderers, called *argot*, which literature has employed of late with such success that several words of this strange vocabulary have been heard from the rosy lips of beautiful women, beneath silken curtains, delighting the ears of princes, more than one of whom has owned himself *floué* (cheated at cards). Let us say here, perhaps to the astonishment of many, that there is no language more energetic, more highly colored, than that of the subterranean world, which, from the origin of empires and chief cities, ferments in cellars, abysmal depths, the “third-floor-under,” — to borrow from dramatic art a lively and striking expression. Is not all the world a stage? The “third-floor-under” is the lowest cellar beneath the boards of the Opera-house, where they put away machinery, ladders, apparitions, and the devils who vomit hell.

Each word of this language presents an image of some kind,—brutal, ingenious, or terrible. Men do not sleep in *argot*, they *pionce*. Remark with what precision that word expresses the peculiar sleep of the hunted, weary, defiant beast called robber; who, the instant he is in safety, falls into the depths of needed sleep, but always under the wings of the suspicion that hovers over him. Horrible sleep! — like that of the wild animal that slumbers and snores while its ears are ever prudently awake.

All is descriptive in this idiom. Woman is a *largeue* (a breeze for sails). And what poesy! A straw is *la plume* (the feather) of *Beauce*, Beauce being rich in cereals. Midnight is rendered by the paraphrase, *Douze plombes croissent* (twelve leads strike); the words make one shudder! *Rincer une cambriole* (rinse out a room), means to plunder it. How inferior the expression, "go to bed," compared with *se piausser* (new-skin one's self). What liveliness of comparison, what imagery! *Dominos*, teeth; *jouer des dominos*, eat in haste like one pursued; *oignon*, onion, tears; *mouche*, fly, police-spy; *boussole*, compass, brains; *pincette*, tongs, legs; *fourchette*, fork, fingers. Argot goes on forever! It follows civilization; it keeps at its heels; it enriches itself with every new invention. Potatoes, brought into use by Louis XVI., and Parmentier, the famous agriculturist (the potato was first called in France "la parmentière"), were instantly argotized as "pigs' oranges." Paper is *faffe*, from the sound when you touch it. Bank-bills were invented, and the galleys at once called them *fafiot garatés*, from Garat, the name of the cashier who signed them. *Fafiot!* can't you hear the rustle of the crisp paper? The thousand-franc note is a *fafiot mûle*; the five-hundred-franc note, a *fafiot femelle*. You may be sure that the galleys will rebaptize all things with fantastic but expressive names.

In 1790 Doctor Guillotin invented, for the benefit of humanity, the expediting piece of machinery which solves all problems suggested by the penalty of death, and bears his name. No sooner had the convicts and ex-galley-slaves surveyed that machine, standing on the monarchial confines of the old system of justice and the frontiers of the new, than they named it the *Abbaye de Monte-à-Regret*, — abbey, separation from the world; *regret*, as you *mount* the steps to it. Then they studied the angle at which the steel blade made its stroke, and called its action *faucher*, to mow. When we remember that the galleys always speak of themselves as *le pré* (the field) it really seems as if those who concern themselves with the science of language ought to how before the creation of these horrible *vocables*, as Charles Nodier would have called them.

We must recognize, moreover, the great antiquity of argot. One tenth of it are words of the lingua romana, another tenth the old Gallic language of Rabelais. *Effondrer*, break open; *otolondrer*, bore; *aubert*, silver, — that is, money; *gironde*, beautiful (the name of a river in the langue d'Oc); *fouillousse*, pocket, — all belong to the language of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. *Affe*, for life, is of the highest antiquity. From *troubler l'affe* comes the word *affreux*, — the meaning of which is “that which troubles life.”

At least one hundred words of argot belong to the language of Panurge, who, in the Rabelaisian work, symbolizes the people,—the name being composed of two Greek words, which mean, “he who does all.” But lo! science changes the whole face of civilization. Railroads are built, and immediately argot is ready with their name, *le roulan vif*, the burning roller.

The name of the head, while it is still upon their shoulders, *sorbonne*, dates from the 13th century, and indicates the antique source of this language in the oldest romances, those of Cervantes, Aretino, and the Italian *novelli*. In all ages, *la fille*, the prostitute, the heroine of so many of the old romances, was the protectress, companion, and comfort of the sharper, the thief, the swindler, the blackleg. Prostitution and robbery are two living protestations, male and female, of the natural state against the social state. Consequently philosophers, new-fangled theorists of the present day, humanitarians, who have at their tail communists and Fourierites, will bring up, before they know it, at two barriers,—theft and prostitution. The thief does n’t discuss in sophistical books questions of property, heredity, and social guarantees; he ignores all that. To him, robbery is coming into possession of his own. He does n’t discuss marriage, nor find fault with it, nor ask it, as in printed utopias, for that mutual agreement, that lasting alliance of souls, which can’t be

generalized ; he couples himself with a woman of his species by chains which are constantly tightened by the hammer of necessity. Modern theorists write philanthropic novels, hazy, muddy, nebulous, but the robber goes to work ; he is as clear as a fact, as logical as a knock-down blow. And what a capacity he has ! ”

Another observation. The world of thieves, prostitutes, and murderers, the galleys and the prisons, have a population of between sixty and eighty thousand individuals, male and female. This world cannot be omitted in any picture of manners and customs, or any truthful reproduction of our social condition. Civil officials, the gendarmerie, and the police make a force of employés nearly equal in numbers to the dangerous classes. Is not this a singular fact ? This antagonism of those who search for and those who avoid each other reciprocally, constitutes a vast and perpetual duel which is eminently dramatic. It is with robbery and prostitution as it is with theatrical life, the police, the priesthood and the gendarmerie. In those six conditions, the individual takes on a special and indelible characterization. He can no longer be his individual self. The stigmata of the divine ministry are irremovable ; so are the signs of a military life. Other professions in which there are strong oppositions, contradictions to civilization, show the same thing. These strange, fantastic, violent, or *sui generis* diagnostics make the

prostitute, the thief, the murderer, the ex-convict, so easy to recognize that they are to their enemies, the police spy and the gendarme, what the game is to the hunter: they have a gait, manner, and complexion, looks, color and smell of their own, in short, infallible characteristics. Hence, that deep science of disguises, which the celebrities of the galley find it necessary to acquire.

One word more on the construction of this underworld, which the abolition of branding, the lessening of penalties, and the stupid indulgence of juries now render menacing. In fact, in twenty years from now, Paris will be surrounded by an army of forty thousand ex-convicts. The department of the Seine, with its fifteen hundred thousand inhabitants, is the only part of France where these criminals can hide themselves. Paris is to them what the virgin forest is to wild beasts.

The *haute pègre*, which is the faubourg Saint-Germain, the aristocracy of this world, resolved itself in 1816, as the result of a Peace which put the future of so many lives in question, into an association called the *Grands Fanandels*, in which were gathered the most celebrated leaders of the band, and some other bold minds then without any means whatever of existence. The word *fanandels* means brothers, friends, comrades. All thieves, convicts, and prisoners are *fanandels*. The *Grands Fanandels*, the cream of the *haute pègre*, constituted for twenty years or more the

Court of Appeals, the Institute, and the Chamber of peers of the people of their world. The *Grands Fan-andels* all had their private means; capital was in common, but their habits and ways were separate. They all knew one another, and each was bound to aid the rest in difficulty. All were above the wiles and seductions of the police; they had their own charter, their own laws, their passwords and signs of recognition. The dukes and peers of the galleys formed, between 1815 and 1819, the famous society of the *Dix Mille* (the Ten Thousand, see “Père Goriot”), thus named from the solemn agreement entered into, never to undertake any affair in which there was less than ten thousand francs to be made. At the time of which we write, that is, in 1827 and 1830, sketches of this society, its forces, the names of its members, etc., were being published by one of the celebrities of the detective police. In those “Memoirs,” we find, with something like terror, the record of an army of great capacities, in men and women so formidable, so able, often so lucky, that criminals like Lévy, Pastourel, Collonge, Chimaux, men between fifty and sixty years of age, are there stated as having been in revolt against society from their earliest childhood. What an avowal of impotence in law and justice is the mere existence of thieves and robbers of that age!

IV.

HIS MAJESTY THE DÂB.

JACQUES COLLIN was the treasurer, not only of the society of the *Dix Mille*, but also of the *Grands Fanandels*, the heroes of the galleys. Competent authorities agree that the convicts at the galleys have property. This singular state of things is explainable. The proceeds of a robbery are never recovered except under peculiar circumstances. Condemned robbers, unable to take the money with them, are forced to have recourse to the honor and capacity of some ex-convict, in whose hands they place their property, as society at large confides in a banking-house.

Formerly, Bibi-Lupin, chief of the detective police for the last ten years, had been a member of the aristocracy of the *Grands Fanandels*. His treachery was caused by a wound to his vanity. Trompe-la-Mort, with his keen intelligence and prodigious force of character, was constantly preferred to him. Hence the unceasing rancor of his pursuit, as chief of the detective police, against Jacques Collin. Hence, also, came certain compromises between Bibi-Lupin and his former

comrades, which the authorities about this time were beginning to suspect.

So, in his desire for vengeance, to which the examining judge had given full play by the order to establish, if possible, the identity of Jacques Collin, the chief of the detectives had very judiciously selected his men when he arranged to confront the Spanish priest with La Pouraille, Fil-de-Soie, and Le Biffon; for La Pouraille and Fil-de-Soie belonged to the *Dix Mille*, and Le Biffon was a *Grand Fanandel*.

La Biffe, the terrible *largeue* of Le Biffon, who to this day has managed to escape all the efforts of the police, thanks to her ability in disguising herself as a well-bred woman, was, of course, at liberty. This woman, who knows perfectly well how to play the characters of women of rank, keeps a carriage and servants. A species of Jacques Collin in petticoats, she is the only woman comparable to Asia, Jacques Collin's right arm. Every hero of the galleys has his devoted mate. Judicial records and secret chronicles will tell you this. No passion of a virtuous woman, not even that which a religious nature feels for a confessor, can surpass the attachment of the mistress who shares the peril of these great criminals. Such passions are nearly always the originating cause, in the men, of their most daring enterprises, and of their murders. Even the necessity of living, and living well, is small in comparison with

the desire these women inspire in their generous Médors to give them jewels, gowns, and especially — for they are always greedy — choice food. The girl desires a shawl, the lover steals it; and she thinks the theft a proof of love. That is how men are frequently led into crime; if we examine the human heart with a microscope, we shall see that this proceeds from a primitive sentiment in the nature of man.

Thus it is that the adoration of their mistresses is acquired by criminals, the terror of society. It is female devotion, crouching faithfully at the doors of prisons, perpetually employed in thwarting the wiles of the police or the examining judges, the incorruptible guardian of the blackest secrets, — which makes so many criminal cases obscure and, in fact, impenetrable. There lies the strength, and also the weakness, of the criminal. In the language of these women, *avoir de la probité* (to be honest) means not to fail in any duty to that attachment; to give all their money to the men *enflacqué* (imprisoned); to watch over their safety and comfort; to keep every species of faith with them; and to undertake for them all possible things. The worst and most dishonoring insult one of these women can cast upon another is to accuse her of infidelity toward a lover who is *serré* (locked up). A girl, in such a case, is looked upon as heartless.

La Pouraille was passionately attached to a woman,

as we shall presently see. Fil-de-Soie, a philosophical egotist, who robbed to procure a fortune, was very like Paccard, Jacques Collin's henchman, who had run away with Prudence Servien and seven hundred and fifty thousand francs. He had no affections; he despised women, and loved only himself. As for Le Biffon, he derived his name, as we have already said, from his attachment to La Biffe. These three illustrious members of the *haute pègre* had a reckoning to demand of Jacques Collin, though the accounts between them were very difficult to establish clearly.

The treasurer alone knew how many of the partners survived, and what was the share of each in the capital placed in his hands. The mortality peculiar to his clients may have entered into Trompe-la-Mort's calculations when he resolved to *manger la grenouille* (eat the frog), dissipate the sum intrusted to him on Lucien. By keeping out of sight of his former companions and of the police for several years, Jacques Collin had almost a certainty of having inherited, according to the laws of the *Grands Fanandels*, the property of at least two-thirds of his clients. Besides, he could easily allege that payments had been made on behalf of the *fanandels fauchés*. No register existed on which to accuse this hero of the *Grands Fanandels*. Absolute trust had been placed in him of necessity, for the hunted wild-beast life led by such beings forces them to a trustful-

ness of the utmost delicacy. Jacques Collin could probably liquidate all demands on the three hundred thousand francs placed in his hands with less than a hundred thousand. At the present moment, as we have already seen, La Pouraille, one of Jacques Collin's creditors, had only ninety days to live. Provided with other sums no doubt much larger than that in Trompe-la-Mort's care, he was little likely to be exacting.

One of the infallible diagnostics by which directors of prisons and their agents, the police, and even the examining-magistrates recognize a *cheval-de-retour* (returned post-horse), that is, one who has already eaten *gour-ganes* (a species of bean, on which the convicts at the galleys are fed), is his knowledge of prison ways; habitual criminals are naturally aware of such usages; they are at home, as we may say, and nothing surprises them.

Up to this time Jacques Collin, keeping watch against himself, had played his part of innocent foreigner admirably, both at La Force, and in the Conciergerie. But now, cast-down with sorrow, crushed by his double death, for during that fatal night he had died twice, Jacques Collin no longer remembered to be other than himself. The jailer was amazed not to be obliged to tell a Spanish priest the way to the *préau*. This great actor had so thoroughly forgotten his part, that he went down the spiral staircase of the Bonbec tower, like an inmate of the Conciergerie.

"Bibi-Lupin is right," thought the jailer; "he is a *cheval-de-retour*; it must be Jacques Collin."

At the moment when Jacques Collin appeared in the sort of frame made for his figure by the casing of the tower door the prisoners had finished making their purchases from Saint-Louis' table, so-called, and were dispersed about the *préau*, always too small for them. The new prisoner was therefore seen by all the others at once, with the unequalled rapidity and precision of the glance of convicts, who are in a *préau* like spiders in the centre of their webs. This comparison is mathematically exact; for the eye being limited on all sides by black and lofty walls, the prisoners see at all moments, without even looking at them, the gate through which the jailers pass, the windows of the parlor, and the door to the staircase of the Bonbec Tower. In the isolation of a prisoner's life, everything is an event to him, and takes hold of his mind. His ennui, comparable to that of a tiger at the Jardin des Plantes, increases his power of attention tenfold. It is not unnecessary to mention here that Jacques Collin, dressed like an ecclesiastic who is not very rigid in the matter of apparel, wore black trousers and a black waistcoat, shoes with silver buckles, black stockings, and a dark-brown *surtout* coat, the cut of which will always betray the priest, no matter what he does, or where he is, especially when these indications are enforced by the

characteristic manner in which the hair is cut. Jacques Collin wore a wig superlatively ecclesiastical, and wonderfully natural.

“*Tiens ! tiens !*” said La Pouraille to Le Biffon,— “a bad sign ! a *sanglier* (wild-boar, priest) ! How did he get here ?”

“ It is one of their *trucs* (dodges) ; that’s a *cuisinier* (spy) of a new kind,” replied Fil-de-Soie ; “ some *marchand de lacets* (gendarme, allusion to handcuffs) disguised, who is after his business.”

The gendarme has three different names in argot : when in pursuit of a criminal, he is a *marchand de lacets* (dealer in strings of any kind) ; when he escorts a prisoner, he is a *hirondelle de la Grève* (swallow of the place of execution) ; when he conducts him to the scaffold, he is the *hussard de la guillotine*.

To finish this picture of the *préau* it is, perhaps, necessary to sketch in a few words the two other *fanandels* whom we have already mentioned. Sélérier, alias the Auvergnat, Père Ralleau, Le Rouleur, Fil-de-Soie (he had, in fact, thirty names and as many passports) will here be designated by the latter nickname, the only one bestowed upon him by the *haute pègre*. This profound philosopher, who saw a gendarme in the priest, was a lively fellow about five feet four inches in height, whose muscles stood out in a singular manner. Beneath an enormous head, he flashed flames from his

little eyes, which were covered (like those of a bird of prey), with gray lids, hard and metallic. At first sight he resembled a wolf, from the width of his jaws, which were vigorously and massively outlined; but all that this resemblance implied of cruelty, even of ferocity, was counterbalanced by the artfulness and vivacity of his features, which were deeply pitted with the small-pox. The edges of each scar, clean-cut, had something *piquante* about them. Sarcastic jests without number were written there. The life of criminals, which means hunger and thirst, and nights passed in bivouacking on quays, and banks, under bridges, or in the streets, the orgies of strong liquors with which some triumph is celebrated, had laid upon this man's face a sort of couch of varnish. If Fil-de-Soie had shown himself exactly as he was, any gendarme or agent of police would have recognized his prey at thirty paces; but he rivalled Jacques Collin in the art of dyeing or painting his person and in making up his dress. At this moment, Fil-de-Soie, carelessly arrayed, like all great actors when not upon the stage, was wearing a sort of hunting jacket,—to which buttons were lacking, while the ragged buttonholes disclosed the white of the lining,—a pair of shabby green slippers, trousers of nankeen now faded into gray, and on his head a cap without a visor, beneath which appeared the corners of a Madras handkerchief, much torn and faded.

Le Biffon, when side by side with Fil-de-Soie, presented a marked contrast to him. This celebrated thief, who was short, stout, fat, active, with a livid skin, a sunken black eye, clothes like a cook, and two bowlegs, alarmed beholders by a countenance in which predominated all the characteristics peculiar to the organization of carnivorous animals.

Fil-de-Soie and Le Biffon were paying court to La Pouraille, who no longer retained any hope of life. He knew very well that he should be tried, condemned and executed within four months; for which reason Fil-de-Soie and Le Biffon called him by no other name than *Le Chanoine*, meaning the Chanoine of the Abbaye de Monte-à-Regret. It can readily be imagined how Fil-de-Soie and Le Biffon cajoled La Pouraille. The latter had buried two hundred and fifty thousand francs in gold, his share of the booty taken from the house of the murdered Crottats. What a magnificent bequest to leave to two *fanandels*, although the pair were certain to be returned to the galleys within a month. They were expecting sentence (for robbery, with "aggravated circumstances") to fifteen years at the galleys, in addition to ten remaining years of a former sentence which they had taken the liberty to interrupt. So, although the one had twenty-two years and the other, twenty-six years of hard labor to do, they both hoped to escape and to find La Pouraille's hidden gold. But

the hero of the *Dix Mille* kept his secret ; he thought it useless to reveal the information until he was actually sentenced. Belonging to the highest aristocracy of the galleys, he had not betrayed his accomplices. His character was well-known ; and Monsieur Popinot, the examining judge in this dreadful affair, had extracted nothing from him.

The terrible triumvirate were standing at the upper end of the *préau*, that is, directly under the *pistoles*. Fil-de-Soie was ending certain instructions to a young man, arrested for his first crime and considering himself sure of a ten years' sentence, who was asking for information about the three *prés* (galleys).

" Well, my little fellow," Fil-de-Soie was saying, sententiously, at the moment when Jacques Collin appeared, " there's only one difference between Brest, Toulon, and Rochefort, if you want to know it."

" Tell me," said the young man, with the curiosity of a novice.

This youth, the son of a family of rank, and accused of forgery, had come down to the *préau* from the adjoining *pistole* to that of Lucien.

" My lad," continued Fil-de-Soie, " at Brest you are sure of finding *gourganes* at the third spoonful when you dip into the bucket ; at Toulon you won't get 'em till the fifth ; and at Rochefort no one gets any unless he 's an *ancien*."

Having spoken, that profound philosopher moved away to rejoin La Pouraille and Le Biffon, who, greatly puzzled by the *sanglier*, began to walk down the *préau*, while Jacques Collin, absorbed in his grief, walked up it. Filled with terrible thoughts, the thoughts of a fallen emperor, Trompe-la-Mort did not notice that he was the centre of all eyes and the object of general attention. He walked slowly, gazing before him at the fatal window where Lucien had hanged himself. None of the prisoners knew of this event, for Lucien's neighbor, from motives which we shall learn presently, had said nothing about it. The three *fanandels* walked abreast, intending to bar the way to the priest.

"That's not a *sanglier*," said La Pouraille to Fil-de-Soie, "he's a *cheval-de-retour*. See how he drags the right!"

It is necessary to explain here, to such readers as have never had a fancy to visit the galleys, that each convict is coupled to another (always a young and an old one together) by a chain. The weight of this chain, riveted to a ring worn just above the ankle, is such that by the end of the first year it has given a peculiar and life-long gait to the wearer. Obliged to send more force into one leg than into the other, in order to draw the *manicle* (that is the name the galleys give to this iron), the convict contracts the habit of that effort. Later, when he no longer wears his chain, he is like a

man whose leg is amputated who still feels the missing limb ; the galley-slave feels his *manicle*, and never gets rid entirely of the gait it gives him. He “drags the right,” as the police term is. This diagnostic, known to convicts as it is to the police, though it may not cause the recognition of a comrade, certainly completes it.

In Trompe-la-Mort, eight years having elapsed since his last escape from the galleys, this peculiar motion was a good deal lessened ; but on this occasion he walked with so slow and solemn a step, as the result of his absorbing meditation, that, slight as the defect was, it could not fail to strike so practised an eye as that of La Pouraille. Moreover, convicts at the galleys, being forever in presence of one another, and having none but themselves to observe, have so studied the countenance of their kind that they can recognize certain habits which escape the knowledge of their systematic enemies, spies, gendarmes, and commissaries of police. It was thus to a slight twitching of the maxillary muscles of the left cheek, recognized by a convict who was sent to a review of the Legion of the Seine, that the lieutenant-colonel of the brigade, the famous Coignard, owed his arrest ; for, in spite of Bibi-Lupin’s assurances, the police were afraid to believe in the identity of Comte Pontis de Sainte-Hélène, with so great a criminal.

“ That is our *dab* (master),” said Fil-de-Soie, after

receiving from Jacques Collin the abstracted glance which men engulfed in despair cast upon all about them.

"Faith! yes, that is *Trompe-la-Mort*," said Le Biffon, rubbing his hands. "Yes, that's his figure, his cut. But what has he done to himself? He does n't seem the same man."

"Oh, I see what he is after!" cried Fil-de-Soie. "He has a plan; he wants to see Théodore before they execute him."

"So they are going to *terrer* (earth, execute) that young one!" said La Pouraille. "Pretty boy! what a hand! what hair! A great loss to society!"

"Yes, Théodore Calvi *morfle* (eats) his last mouthful to-day," said Le Biffon. "Ah! his *largues* must be crying their eyes out, for they loved him well, the little beggar!"

"So here you are, old fellow!" said La Pouraille to Jacques Collin.

And in concert with his two acolytes, between whom he was walking arm in arm, he barred the way of the new-comer.

"Oh, *dab!* why did you make yourself a *sanglier?* " added La Pouraille.

"They say you have *poissé nos philippes* (filched our five-franc pieces)," said Le Biffon, with a threatening air.

“ Do you mean to *abouler du carle* (give back the money ; carle from carolus, money struck under King Charles VIII.),” demanded Fil-de-Soie.

These three interrogations went off like pistol-shots.

“ Do not ridicule a poor priest brought here by mistake,” replied Jacques Collin, who instantly recognized his former comrades.

“ That’s the *son de son grelot* (sound of his rattle, speech), if it is n’t his *frimousse* (face),” said La Pou-raille, putting his hand on Jacques Collin’s shoulder.

This action and the looks of his three comrades brought the *dâb* violently out of his dejection, and restored him to a sense of actual life; for during this fatal night he had roamed the spiritual and infinite worlds of the soul’s consciousness in search of some new existence.

“ *Ne fais pas dû ragoût sur ton dâb* (Don’t rouse suspicions on your master),” said Jacques Collin, in a hollow, threatening voice, which was not unlike the smothered growl of a lion. “ *La raille* (the police) are there. Let them fall into their own trap. I am playing *mislocq* (comedy) for a *fanandel en fine pegrène* (a comrade in the last extremity).”

This was said with the unction of a priest trying to impress sinners, and was accompanied by a look with which Jacques Collin took in the whole *préau*, saw the jailers under the arcade, and showed them sarcastically to his comrades.

“ See those *cuisiniers* (spies). *Allumez vos clairs, et remouchez* (light your lights and snuff the candles ; see and observe). *Ne me conobrez pas, épargnons le poitou,* and *engantez moi en sanglier* (Don’t know me ; let us take precautions, and treat me as a priest), or I’ll ruin you, — you, your *largues*, and your *aubert* (fortunes).”

“ *T’as donc tafe de noziques* (do you distrust us) ? ” said Fil-de-Soie. “ Have you come to *cromper* (save), Théodore ? ”

“ Théodore ! ” exclaimed Jacques Collin, repressing a cry. It was a last torturing blow to the broken colossus.

“ They are going to *buter* (knock over, guillotine) him,” said La Pouraille. “ He has been *gerbé à mort* (sheaved, condemned to death) for the last two months.”

Jacques Collin was taken with a sudden faintness ; his knees gave way. The three *fanandels* supported him, and he had the presence of mind to clasp his hands, and seem to speak with unction. La Pouraille and Le Biffon respectfully held him up, while Fil-de-Soie ran to the jailer stationed as guard before the door which led to the parlor.

“ This venerable priest wants to sit down ; give him a chair,” he said.

Thus Bibi-Lupin’s grand stroke was a failure.

Trompe la-Mort, like Napoleon, recognized by his soldiers, obtained the respect and submission of the three convicts. Two words had sufficed. Those words were *your largues* and *your aubert* (*your women and your money*), the summing up of the real affections of mankind. This threat was to the three criminals an indication of power. The *dâb* still held their fortune in his hands. All-powerful as ever, their *dâb* had not betrayed them, as false brothers said he had. Moreover, the colossal reputation for ability and shrewdness acquired by their master stimulated the curiosity of the three men; for, in prison life, curiosity is the sole spur to these jaded minds. The boldness of Jacques Collin's present disguise, maintained even under the bolts and bars of the Conciergerie, bewildered and dazzled the three criminals.

“ I have been in solitary confinement for the last four days, and I did not know that Théodore was so near the *abbaye*,” said Jacques Collin. “ I came here to save a poor young fellow who hanged himself yesterday, up *there*, at four o'clock, and here I am, confronted with another misfortune. I have no longer any aces in my game ! ”

“ Poor *dâb* ! ” said Fil-de-Soie.

“ Ha ! the *boulanger* (baker, devil) abandons me ! ” cried Jacques Collin, tearing himself out of his comrades' arms. “ I tell you there comes a moment when

the world is stronger than we are! *La Cigogne* (the stork, Palais de Justice, prefecture of police, the criminal authorities), *La Cigogne* nabs us at last."

The director of the Conciergerie, informed of the faintness of the Spanish priest, came himself to the *préau* to watch him. He ordered a chair to be brought, made him sit down in the sunlight, and examined his whole appearance and bearing with that formidable perspicacity which increases day by day through the exercise of such functions, though it is always hidden under an air of perfect indifference.

"Ah, monsieur!" said Jacques Collin, "to be confounded with such people, the refuse of society, criminals, murderers! But God will not abandon his servant. My dear monsieur, I will strive to mark my passage through this dreadful place by acts of mercy, the memory of which will last. I will endeavor to convert these unhappy men, and teach them that they have a soul; that eternal life awaits them, and although they have lost all on earth, they still have heaven to win,—the heaven that belongs to true repentance."

Twenty or thirty prisoners, clustering at the back of the three great convicts, whose dangerous glances kept three feet of distance between themselves and the inquisitive group, heard this allocution uttered with evangelical unction.

"He! Monsieur Gault," said the formidable La Pouraille; "oh, yes, we'll listen to him!"

"They tell me," said Jacques Collin, beside whom Monsieur Gault was standing, "that a man condemned to death is in this prison."

"Yes; they have just read to him the rejection of his appeal," replied Monsieur Gault.

"I don't understand what that means," said Jacques Collin, looking helplessly about him.

"Heavens! is n't he *sinve* (simple)?" said the youth who had lately consulted Fil-de-Soie about the galleys.

"Why, it means," said the nearest prisoner, "that to-day or to-morrow they 'll *fauche* him."

"*Fauche*?" said Jacques Collin, whose look and tone of ignorance filled his three *fanandels* with admiration.

"In their language," said the director, "that means the execution of the penalty of death. When the clerk has read to the prisoner the rejection of his appeal, the executioner receives orders to proceed with the execution. The unhappy man has steadily refused the succor of religion."

"Ah, monsieur," cried Jacques Collin, "there is a soul to save!"

He clasped his hands with an expression of feeling which seemed to have the effect of divine fervor upon the watchful director.

"Monsieur," continued Trompe-la-Mort, "let me prove to you what I am, and what I can do; permit me to bring repentance into that hardened heart. God has given me the faculty of saying certain words which produce great changes in the soul. I touch some hearts; I open them. What can you fear? Send jailers or gendarmes with me if you choose."

"I will see if the chaplain of the prison will allow you to take his place," said Monsieur Gault.

The director withdrew, struck with the air of perfect indifference, except as to curiosity, with which the convicts and other prisoners looked at the priest, whose unctuous voice bestowed a charm on his French and Spanish jargon.

"How did you come here, monsieur l'abbé?" asked Fil-de-Soie's young questioner.

"Oh, by mistake!" replied Jacques Collin, taking the measure of the young man. "I was found in the house of a courtesan who was robbed after her death. It was evident that she had killed herself; but the robbers, who were probably the servants, were not arrested."

"Was it on account of that robbery the young man hanged himself?"

"The poor lad could not endure the thought of being disgraced by unjust imprisonment," replied Trompe-la-Mort, raising his eyes to heaven.

"Yes," said the young man, "for I am told they were just going to release him when he committed suicide. What ill-luck!"

"It is only innocence that cannot bear the thought of disgrace," said Jacques Collin. "Remark also that the theft was a loss, not a gain, to him."

"How much did it amount to?" asked Fil-de-Soie, the deep and shrewd.

"Seven hundred and fifty thousand francs," said Jacques Collin, in a low voice.

The three convicts looked at each other, and retired from the group which the other prisoners had formed round the so-called ecclesiastic.

"It is he who has *rincé la profonde* (rinsed out, robbed) the girl," said Fil-de-Soie to Le Biffon, in a low voice. "They have tried to *coquer le taffe* (frighten us; *taffe* from the German *taffen*, to be afraid) about our *thunes de balles* (five-franc pieces).

"He'll always be the *dâb* of the *Grands Fanandels*," said La Pouraille. "Our *carle* has not been *décaré* (made away with)."

La Pouraille, who was looking for a man in whom he could trust, had an interest in thinking Jacques Collin honest. In prisons, above all other places, men believe what they hope.

"I'll bet that he'll *esquinte le dâb de la Cigogne*

(fool the attorney-general) and *cromper Théodore*," said Fil-de-Soie.

"If he does," said Le Biffon, "I sha'n't exactly think him Meg (God), but he must have *bouffurdé*, as they say he has, with the *boulanger* (smoked a pipe with the devil)."

"Yes, that's so; did n't you hear him say, '*Le boulanger* abandons me?'" remarked Fil-de-Soie.

"Ah!" cried La Pouraille, "if he would only *cromper ma sorbonne*, what a *viocque* (life) I'd have with my *fade de carle* (share of our money) safe in his hands, and my *rondins jaunes servis* (gold pieces buried)."

"*Fais sa balle* (follow his advice)," said Fil-de-Soie.

"*Planches-tu* (are you joking)?" replied La Pouraille, looking at his *fanandel*.

"Are n't you *sinve* (silly)!" exclaimed Le Biffon. "You 'll be *gerbé à la passe* (condemned to death); therefore, you have n't any other *lourde à pessigner* (door you can force) to keep on your *paturons* (feet), and *morfiler, dessaler, and goupiner* (eat, drink, and steal) again, except to lend him your back."

"One thing is certain," said La Pouraille, "not one of us is to fail the *dâb*; whoever does, I 'll take him with me where I am going."

"And he 'll do as he says!" cried Fil-de-Soie.

Persons who are least susceptible of sympathy for this strange world of criminals can now conceive the state of mind of Jacques Collin, who saw on the one hand the dead body of the idol he had watched during five terrible hours of the past night, and on the other, the approaching death of his former chain companion, Théodore Calvi. Even to see the latter, he had need to display uncommon cleverness; but to save him would be a miracle; and his mind already turned that way.

To understand what he now attempted, it is necessary to remark here that thieves and murderers and all those who people the galleys are not as formidable as we believe them to be. Putting certain very rare exceptions aside, they are all cowards, as the result, no doubt, of the fear that is perpetually pressing on their minds. Their faculties being ceaselessly bent on stealing, and the execution of each exploit demanding the employment of all the forces of life, an agility of mind equal to that of the body, and an attention which uses up their mental force, they become stupid outside the range of these violent exercises of their will, for the same reason that a singer or a dancer falls exhausted after a fatiguing *pas*, or one of those terrible *duos* which modern composers inflict upon the public.

Evil-doers are, in fact, when not employed upon their

special business, so devoid of reason, or so oppressed by fear, that they become under many circumstances absolute children. Credulous to the last degree, the simplest strategy will take them in. After the success of some enterprise, they are in such a state of prostration that they rush immediately into all forms of debauchery, to recover calmness by exhausting all their forces ; they seek forgetfulness of their crime in the overthrow of their reason. In this condition, they are at the mercy of the police. Once arrested, they are blind, they lose their heads, they have so much need of hope that they believe in everything ; and there is no absurdity which they cannot be made to admit. An example will serve to show to what lengths the stupidity of a captured criminal can go. Bibi-Lupin had recently obtained the confession of a murderer, who was nineteen years of age, by inducing him to believe that minors were never executed. When the young fellow was transferred to the Conciergerie to undergo his sentence after the rejection of his appeal, Bibi-Lupin saw him.

"Are you quite sure you are not twenty years old?" said that terrible detective agent.

"Quite sure; I am only nineteen and a half," said the murderer, who was perfectly calm.

"Well," replied Bibi-Lupin, "make yourself easy; you never will be twenty."

“ How so ? ”

“ Because you will be *fauché* within three days.”

The murderer who still believed, even after his sentence, that minors were never executed, collapsed like an *omelette soufflée*.

These men, so cruel from the necessity of suppressing testimony, for they murder to destroy proof (this is one of the reasons put forth by those who oppose the death penalty), these colossi of adroitness and ability, in whom the action of the hand, the rapidity of the glance, in short, all the senses are trained like those of savages, are only heroic evil-doers on the scene of their exploits. The crime committed, not only do embarrassments begin (for they are as doltish under the necessity of hiding the proceeds of their theft as in the rest of their conduct), but they are weakened physically, like a woman after her confinement. Vigorously energetic in their conceptions of an evil deed, they are like children after it succeeds. In a word, these men are wild beasts, easy to kill when they are surfeited. Once in prison, however, these singular beings become men in dissimulation and silent discretion, who seldom give way till the last instant, after they have been tortured and exhausted by examinations and the length of their imprisonment.

We can now understand how it was, that the three *fanandels*, instead of betraying their *dâb*, resolved to

serve him ; they suspected that he was master of the seven hundred and fifty thousand francs ; they admired his calmness under the bolts and bars of the Conciergerie ; and they believed him capable of affording them protection.

V.

THE CONDEMNED CELL.

WHEN Monsieur Gault, the director of the Conciergerie, left the *préau*, he returned to his office through the parlor, in order to find Bibi-Lupin, who for the last twenty minutes had been watching Jacques Collin's meeting with his fellow *fanandels* through a peep-hole constructed below one of the windows in that room.

"None of them recognized him," said Monsieur Gault; "and Napolitas, who has watched them all, detected nothing. The poor priest, in his despondency through the night, said not a word that showed Jacques Collin beneath his cassock."

"That proves only how well he knows prisons," replied the detective officer.

Napolitas, Bibi-Lupin's secretary, unknown to all the prisoners then in the Conciergerie, had played the part of the young man of family arrested for forgery.

"He asks permission to confess the man who is now to be executed."

"Good!" said Bibi-Lupin, "that's our last resource; I wonder I did not think of it. Théodore Calvi, that young Corsican, was Jacques Collin's chain companion.

They used to say that Jacques Collin made him the best *patarasses* ever seen at the *pré*."

Galley-slaves make a sort of pad which they slip between the iron ring and their flesh, so as to lessen the pressure of the *manicle* on the ankle and instep. These pads, made of tow and linen, are called at the galleys, *patarasses*.

"Who is watching the condemned man?" asked Bibi-Lupin, addressing Monsieur Gault.

"Cœur-la-Virole."

"Good! then I'll *piausser* (new-skin) myself as a gendarme and watch him myself. I shall hear them, and I'll answer for all."

"Are not you afraid that if it is Jacques Collin, he might recognize you and strangle you?" asked Monsieur Gault.

"As a gendarme I shall have a sabre," replied the officer. "Besides, if it is Jacques Collin, he will never do anything to let himself be *gerber à la passe* (condemned to death). If he is a priest, of course I am safe."

"There is no time to lose, then," said Monsieur Gault; "it is half-past eight; Père Sauteloup had just read the rejection of the appeal, and Monsieur Sanson is waiting for the order from the Parquet."

"Yes, the execution is fixed for to-day; the *hus-sards de la Veuve* (*veuve*, *widow*, — another name, a terrible name, for the guillotine) are ordered out," re-

plied Bibi-Lupin. "I understand why it is that the attorney-general hesitates. The fellow has steadily declared his innocence, and to my mind there have not been convincing proofs against him."

"He is a true Corsican," replied Monsieur Gault; "he has never said a word that could implicate him; he resists all efforts to make him speak."

These last words contain the dismal history of a man condemned to death,—a man whom law and justice cut from the land of the living. The Parquet [the attorney-general, his bureau, in general terms, the Law] is sovereign; it is dependent on none; it acts of its own conscience only. Prisons belong to the Parquet, which is their absolute master. Poesy has laid hold of the "man condemned to die," as a social subject eminently fitted to strike the imagination. Poesy can be, and has been, sublime on that topic; prose has no resource, except reality, but that reality is terrible enough to hold its own against poetical enthusiasm. The life of a condemned criminal, who has not confessed his crime or his accomplices, is one of fearful torture. No longer subjected to the "boot," which crushed the feet, nor to the pouring in of water to the stomach, nor to the stretching of the limbs by horrible machinery, the wretched man is delivered over to an artful and, so to speak, negative torture. The Parquet leaves him, after he is once sentenced, absolutely alone;

in darkness and in silence, with only one companion (a spy), whom, of necessity, he distrusts.

Amiable modern philanthropy thinks it knows all about the horrible punishment of isolation ; it is quite mistaken. Since the abolition of torture, the Parquet, with a natural desire of comforting the already too sensitive consciences of juries, has discovered the terrible resources of working upon remorse which solitary confinement gives to justice. Solitude is a vacuum, and the moral nature abhors it as deeply as the physical nature. Solitude is not habitable, except to the man of genius who fills it with his ideas, — those virgins of the spiritual world ; or to the contemplator of Divine works, who finds it illuminated by the light of heaven and filled by the breath and voice of God. Outside of those two classes of men, so near to paradise, solitude is to torture what morals are to physics. Between solitude and torture, there is simply the difference between nervous illness and a case of surgery. It is suffering multiplied indefinitely. The body touches the infinite through the nervous system as the spirit penetrates it by thought. Therefore, in the records of the Parquet of Paris criminals who die without confessing their crime are few in number.

This gloomy situation, which assumes enormous proportions in certain cases (in politics for instance, when the State or a dynasty is in question), has a place of

its own in the “Comedy of Human Life.” But here and now, a description of the stone box in which, since the Restoration, the Parquet of Paris keeps the prisoner who is condemned to death, must suffice to show the horror of the last days of that man.

Before the revolution of July there existed, and still exists, in the Conciergerie what is called the “death chamber.” This room adjoins the office, but is separated from it by a massive wall ; it is also flanked by a wall, seven feet thick, which supports a portion of the vast Salle des Pas-perdus. It is entered from a long, dark corridor, into which the eye penetrates when we stand in the middle of the great arched hall of the *guichet*, the office hall. This dismal room gets all its light from a ventilator, protected by a heavy iron grating, which is hardly noticeable as we enter the Conciergerie. All escape from it is impossible. The corridor, which leads to the solitary cells and the women’s quarter, opens in the hall near the stove, round which the jailers and gendarmes are always gathered. The ventilator, sole opening to the exterior, nine feet above the floor, looks into the first court-yard, guarded by sentries at the outer gate. No human power could succeed in mining the walls ; moreover, a criminal, when condemned to death, is instantly put into the *camisole* (strait-jacket), — an article which deprives him of the use of his hands ; he is also chained

by the leg to his camp bedstead, and, as a final guard, he is watched and fed by a *mouton* (police spy). The floor of this room is paved with thick stone blocks, and the light is so feeble that the eye can barely distinguish anything.

It is impossible not to feel chilled to the very marrow of our bones in entering this dreadful place, even to-day, when sixteen years have elapsed since this death chamber has been used,— changes in the execution of criminal justice having altered the arrangements of the prison. But imagine the criminal in that place in company with his remorse, in silence and darkness,— two sources of horror,— and ask yourselves if such imprisonment was not enough to drive him mad. What organizations those must be if their quality resists a mental strain to which the strait-jacket adds that of immobility, inaction !

Théodore Calvi, the Corsican, now twenty-seven years of age, had wrapped himself in a veil of absolute silence, and for two months had resisted the effects of this dungeon, and the insidious chatter of his attendant spy. The following account of the singular criminal case which had led to the Corsican's condemnation is worth reading. Although it is extremely curious, the analysis here given will be very rapid ; for it is impossible to make a long digression in a scene which seeks to offer no other interest than that surrounding Jacques

Collin,—a species of vertebral column, who by his dangerous influence is bound up, so to speak, with other volumes of this study of manners and customs,—namely, “Père Goriot,” “The Great Man of the Provinces in Paris,” and “Lucien de Rubempré.” The imagination of the reader will develop for itself the mysteries of a crime which at this moment was causing great uneasiness to the judges and juries of the court before which Théodore Calvi had been tried. Since the day when the criminal’s petition had been rejected by the Court of Appeals, the attorney-general, Monsieur de Granville, had studied the case, and, in consequence, had delayed the execution of the sentence from day to day, so anxious was he to reassure the jurors by making known publicly that the criminal had confessed his crime.

A poor widow at Nanterre, living in a lonely house in that township, which is situated, as we all know, in the middle of the arid plain which lies between Mont-Valérien, Saint-Germain, the hills of Sartrouville, and d’Argenteuil, was murdered and robbed a few days after she had received her share of an unexpected legacy. This share consisted of three thousand francs in money, a dozen forks and spoons, a chain, a gold watch, and some linen. Instead of investing the money in Paris, as the notary of the man who bequeathed it advised, the old woman chose to keep it by her. In the first place, she had never before seen so much

money of her own; and in the next, she distrusted every living soul in matters of business, as country-people of the working-classes generally do. But after much discussion with a wine-merchant of Nanterre, who was her relation, and also the relation of the deceased man, the widow finally resolved to buy an annuity, sell her house at Nanterre, and go to live as a *bourgeoise* at Saint-Germain.

The house she occupied, surrounded by a large garden inclosed by a miserable fence, was the usual poor abode which small farmers in the neighborhood of Paris build for themselves. Plaster and rough stone, being plentiful at Nanterre, where the land is honeycombed with quarries worked on the surface, had been hastily put together, as we often see near Paris, without the slightest architectural idea. Such constructions are the huts of civilized savages. This particular house consisted of a ground-floor and a second floor, above which were the attics. The husband of this woman, and the builder of the house, who had owned a quarry, had put very solid iron bars to all the windows. The entrance door was also remarkably solid. The man must have feared their lonely life in the open country,—and such a country! His business connections were chiefly with the master-masons of Paris, and from thence he brought back in his empty carts the more important materials of his house, which was built about five hundred feet

from the quarry. He picked out the things he wanted among the various “demolitions” of Paris, and bought them at a very low price. Thus the windows, iron railings, doors, blinds, and all cabinet-work, came from authorized destruction, or were gifts made to him by his customers, the masons. The house, approached through a good-sized court-yard, in which were the stables, was inclosed from the main road by walls. A strong iron railing made the gate; watch-dogs were in the stable, and a small dog was kept in the house at night. Behind this building lay a garden of rather more than two acres in extent.

The wife of the quarry-man, now a widow without children, lived alone in the house with a single servant. The sale of the quarry had paid off the debts of her late husband, who had been dead two years. The sole property of the widow was the lonely house, where she kept cows and chickens, selling the milk and eggs in Nanterre. As she no longer kept either a stable-man, a carter, or laborers in the quarry, the garden was not cultivated and all the vegetables she ate came up of themselves in the stony soil.

The proceeds of the sale of the house, and her late inheritance amounted in all to about eight thousand francs, and the widow thought herself very lucky to be able to live at Saint-Germain on the annuity of seven or eight hundred francs which she expected to get

from the investment. She had held several conferences with a notary at Saint-Germain, for she refused to take an annuity from her cousin the wine-merchant at Nanterre, who had offered her the investment.

This was the state of things when it was noticed one day that neither the widow Pigeau nor her servant-woman had been seen for some time. At the end of three days, the law, informed of this fact, went to work ; Monsieur Popinot, an examining judge, and the public prosecutor came down from Paris, and the following facts were established : —

Neither the iron gates of the court-yard, nor the entrance door to the house showed any sign of burglary. The key was in the lock of the front door on the inside. Not a single iron bar had been forced. The locks, blinds, in short, all the means of closing the house, were intact. The walls showed no trace whatever of the passage of evil-doers. The chimneys being of tile flues did not afford any practicable entrance. The roofs were sound and in proper condition, and showed no signs of violence. When the magistrates, the gendarmes, and Bibi-Lupin reached the bedrooms on the second floor, they found the widow Pigeau strangled in her bed, and the servant strangled in hers with their own night-handkerchiefs. The two bodies were in a state of putrefaction ; so were the bodies of the two watch-dogs and the little house-dog. The three

thousand francs had been taken as well as the forks and spoons and jewels. The garden fence was next examined; it had not been broken. Within the gardens the paths showed no trace of any one having passed along them. The judge thought it probable that the murderer had walked on the grass to avoid leaving footprints, in case he had entered the premises at the back. But, even so, how did he get into the house? On the garden side, the door had a frame in which were three iron bars that were found to be intact. The key was in the lock on the inside as at the front door.

When the fact of these impossibilities was plainly demonstrated by Monsieur Popinot and Bibi-Lupin, who spent a whole day on the premises, observing everything, and also by the public prosecutor and the commander of the post at Nanterre, the murder became a terrible problem, before which justice and the law seemed forced to succumb.

This drama, which was published in the “*Gazette des Tribunaux*,” took place in the winter of 1828 and 1829. Heaven knows what an excitement of curiosity the mysterious crime stirred up in Paris. But Paris finds new dramas to batten on every morning, and soon forgets each one. The police, however, forget nothing. Three months after the abortive inquiry, a girl of the town, who was being observed by the agents of Bibi-

Lupin in consequence of her sudden extravagance, and watched on account of her acquaintance with certain thieves, endeavored ineffectually to pawn, through a friend, twelve knives and forks and a gold watch and chain. This fact reached the ears of Bibi-Lupin, who remembered such articles as being stolen at Nanterre. The commissioners of the Mont-de-Piété, and all the second-hand dealers in Paris who were known to be receivers of stolen goods were notified, and Bibi-Lupin put the girl, who was called Manon-la-blonde, under strict surveillance.

Now Manon-la-blonde was deeply in love with a young man who was little known, and was thought to be indifferent to the fair Manon. Mystery upon mystery. This young man, when subjected after this discovery to the attention of spies, was found to be no other than an escaped galley-slave, a famous hero of several Corsican vendettas, the handsome Théodore Calvi.

A treacherous receiver of stolen goods, one of those dealers who serve both criminals and police, was launched upon Théodore, and after sundry negotiations he agreed to buy the plate and the watch and chain. At the moment when this man was counting out the money to Théodore, who was disguised as a woman, the police made a descent upon the shop, arrested Calvi, and seized the articles. The examination at once be-

gan. From such feeble elements it was impossible to draw out, to use the Parquet's term, a capital offence. Calvi never contradicted himself; his statement was not confused. He said that a country woman had sold him those articles at Argenteuil; after having bought them, he heard of the murder at Nanterre and saw the danger of possessing articles which, having been described in the inventory of the deceased uncle's property, were known to have been in the possession of the murdered woman. Finally, being compelled by poverty to sell these articles he had tried to get rid of them by employing a young woman, who was not otherwise mixed up in the affair.

Nothing further could be obtained from the Corsican, who was able by his firmness and his silence to put into the mind of the authorities an idea that the wine-merchant of Nanterre was the guilty person, and that his wife had sold the stolen articles. The unfortunate cousin of the late widow and his wife were arrested; but after a week's imprisonment and close examination it was proved that neither husband nor wife had left their place of business during the time when the murder was committed. Moreover, Calvi did not recognize in the wife the woman who, as he declared, had sold him the property.

As Manon-la blonde, who was implicated in the affair, was proved to have spent over a thousand francs be-

tween the period of the murder and the time when she, at Calvi's request, tried to pawn the stolen articles, such proof was thought sufficient to send both the ex-convict and his concubine before the court of assizes. This murder was the eighteenth committed by the Corsican ; he was judged guilty, and condemned to death, for he seemed to be the author of the crime so skilfully committed. The examination had proved by a number of witnesses that Calvi was at Nanterre for over a month at the time of the murder ; he had worked for masons, and his face was constantly covered with dust and plaster. All who saw him at Nanterre declared that he was only eighteen years old, and he must have plotted and prepared the crime for a month before committing it.

The Parquet believed he had accomplices. They measured the tubes of the chimney to see if Manon-la-blonde's slender body could have passed through them ; but a child of six could n't have slipped through the tile-pipes which modern architects substitute for the huge chimney flues of former days. It was this irritating and singular uncertainty which delayed the execution of Théodore's sentence. The prison chaplain had, as we have already heard, totally failed in obtaining a confession from him.

This affair and Calvi's name appear to have escaped the attention of Jacques Collin, then preoccupied with

his own plot against Nucingen. Moreover, Trompe-la-Mort had avoided as much as possible *les amis*, and all connected with the Palais de Justice. To be brought face to face with a *fanandel* might subject the *dab* to a demand for an accounting he could not make.

The director of the Conciergerie went at once to the office of the attorney-general, and there found the public prosecutor talking with Monsieur de Granville, and holding the order for execution in his hand. Monsieur de Granville, who had spent the night at the hôtel de Séziry, overwhelmed with fatigue and anxiety (for the physicians dared not affirm as yet that the countess would keep her reason), was nevertheless obliged by this important execution to be at his office early. After talking a few moments with the director, Monsieur de Grauville took back the order of execution from his assistant and gave it to Gault.

"Let the execution take place," he said, "unless extraordinary circumstances appear, and of those you must judge; I trust wholly in your prudence. They can delay putting up the scaffold until half-past ten o'clock; you have, therefore, an hour left. In such a case hours are equal to centuries, and many events may occur in a century. Do not give any hope of a reprieve. Let the *toilette* be made if necessary; and if the prisoner makes no confession, give Sanson the order for execution by half-past ten. Let him wait till then."

As the director was leaving the office of the attorney-general, he met Monsieur Camusot in the vaulted passage which leads to the gallery, who was on his way to find Monsieur de Granville. He stopped, and had a rapid conversation with the judge, whom he informed of all that had happened at the Conciergerie in relation to Jacques Collin; then he hurried on to superintend the confronting of Trômppe-la-Mort with his former chain companion. He did not, however, permit the self-styled ecclesiastic to see the condemned man until Bibi-Lupin, admirably disguised as a gendarme, had taken the place of the police spy who was watching the young Corsican.

It is impossible to describe the astonishment of the three *fanandels* when they saw a jailer come in search of Jacques Collin to take him to the condemned cell. They jumped toward the chair in which Jacques Collin was sitting, simultaneously.

“Is it for to-day, Monsieur Julien?” asked Fil-de-Soie of the jailer.

“Yes, Charlot is there,” replied the official, with perfect indifference.

The populace and the world that inhabits prisons give that name to the executioner of Paris. It dates back to the revolution of 1789. The name produced a profound sensation. All the prisoners looked at each other.

“ It is settled,” said the jailer, in reply to some inquiries. “ Monsieur Gault has received the order for execution, and the sentence has just been read.”

“ So,” said La Pouraille, “ the lad has had all the sacraments.”

And he drew in a long breath.

“ Poor little Théodore ! ” cried Le Biffon ; “ he is a nice little chap. It is a pity to éternuer *dans le son* (sneeze into the bran, the basket of the guillotine) at his age.”

The jailer went toward the *guichet*, thinking that the Spanish priest followed him ; but Jacques Collin walked slowly, and when he saw the jailer ten steps ahead of him, he turned faint, and signed to La Pouraille to give him an arm.

“ He’s a murderer,” said Napolitas, motioning to La Pouraille, and offering to the priest his own arm.

“ No, to me he is a sufferer,” replied Trompe-la-Mort, with the presence of mind and unction of the archbishop of Cambrai.

He walked away from Napolitas, who had seemed to him suspicious from the moment he laid eyes on him, and said rapidly in a low voice to the three *fanandels* :

“ He is on the first step of the *Abbaye-de-Monte-à-Regret*, but I’m the prior. I’ll show you how to *entifler la Cicogne* (lead to church, get round the law). I’ll *cromper* that *sorbonne* from its clutches, — I seek

to give that soul to heaven ! ” he added, with fervor, as he saw the prisoners pressing round him.

He overtook the jailer at the *guichet*.

“ He came to save Theodore,” said Fil-de-Soie, — “ we guessed right. What a *dâb* ! ”

“ How can he save him ? The *hussards de la guillotine* are there ; he won’t even be allowed to see him,” said Le Biffon.

“ He has *le boulanger* on his side ! ” cried La Pouaille. “ He, *poisser nos philippes* (crib our money) ! — not he ! He loves *les amis* too well ; he has too much need of us. They’ve been trying to put us à *la manque pour lui* (fail, betray him) ; but we are not *gnioles* (ninnies). If he can *cromper* Théodore he shall have *ma balle* (my secret). ”

These last words only served to increase the devotion of the three convicts to their master. From that moment their famous *dâb* became all their hope.

Jacques Collin now played his part without a failure. He, who knew the Conciergerie as well as he knew the three galleys, mistook the way so naturally that the jailer was obliged to say to him at every turn, “ This way,” “ That way,” until they reached the *greffe* (the chief, or registration, office). There Jacques Collin saw at a glance, leaning against the stove, a large man dressed in black, with a long and ruddy face which was not without a certain distinction, in whom he recognized Sanson.

"Monsieur is the chaplain?" he said, going up to him with an air of cordiality.

This mistake was so dreadful that it horrified the spectators.

"No, monsieur," replied Sanson, "I have other functions."

This Sanson, the father of the last executioner (from whom the office has lately been taken), was the son of the Sanson who executed Louis XVI.

After an hereditary exercise of this function for four hundred years, the heir of so many torturers had attempted to cast off the burden of this entail. The Sansons, executioners at Rouen during a period of two centuries before they were promoted to the first office of their calling in the kingdom, had executed the sentences of the law, from father to son, since the thirteenth century. There are few families who can show an example of a genealogy preserved from father to son for six centuries. The man whom we now see was a cavalry captain with every prospect of a gallant career before him, when his father compelled him to assist in the execution of the King. After that, when the countless executions of 1793 required two scaffolds (one at the Barrière du Trône, the other on the place de Grève), he made him his second. About sixty years of age at the time of which we now write, this terrible functionary was noticeable for his

gentle and composed manner, the good taste of his dress, and his deep contempt for Bibi-Lupin and his acolytes, the purveyors of the guillotine. The only indication in the man which betrayed the blood of the old torturers was the breadth and the extraordinary thickness of his hands. Sufficiently well-educated, valuing highly his status as citizen and elector, passionately devoted, it was said, to gardening, this tall, stout man with a low voice, a calm demeanor, a broad and bald forehead, and habitually silent, was far more like a member of the British aristocracy than the executioner of France. Consequently, a Spanish canon might easily have committed the mistake which Jacques Collin committed intentionally.

"He is not a convict," said the head-jailer to the director.

"I begin to think so myself," replied Monsieur Gault, nodding to his subordinate.

Jacques Collin was at once ushered into the sort of cellar where young Théodore, in a strait-jacket, was sitting on the edge of his horrible iron bedstead. Trompe-la-Mort, taking instant advantage of the light thrown into the cell by the opening of the door, recognized his enemy Bibi-Lupin in the gendarme who was standing on guard and leaning on his sabre.

"*Io sono Gabba-Morte. Parla nostro italiano,*" said Jacques Collin, quickly. "*Vengo ti salvare.*" ("I

am Trompe-la-Mort; speak Italian; I come to save you.”)

All that the two comrades now said to each other was unintelligible to the false gendarme, and as Bibi-Lupin was there as guard over the prisoner he dared not leave his post. The wrath of the chief of the detective police may be imagined.

Théodore Calvi, a young man with a sallow, olive skin, fair hair, and hollow eyes of a misty blue, extremely well-made, and possessing that amazing muscular strength which is found concealed under the lymphatic appearance of many Southerners, would have had a most charming countenance were it not for a retreating forehead, arched eyebrows, red lips of savage cruelty, and a twitching of the muscles of the face, denoting that faculty for irritation especially characteristic of Corsicans which makes them so prompt to assassinate in a sudden quarrel.

Amazed at the sound of Jacques Collin’s voice, Théodore raised his head, believing it was some hallucination. Then, as a two months’ sojourn in that stone box had accustomed his eyes to the darkness, he saw that the new-comer was a priest, and he sighed heavily. He did not recognize Jacques Collin, whose face, seamed by the action of sulphuric acid, did not resemble that of his *dâb*.

“It is I, your Jacques; I have made myself a priest,

and I come to save you. Don't be fool enough to recognize me ; seem to be confessing to me."

This was said very rapidly.

"The young man appears to be much broken down ; death terrifies him. I think he will confess all," said Jacques Collin, addressing the gendarme.

"Tell me something to prove that you are *he* ; for you have nothing about you but *his* voice," said Théodore.

"Poor youth ! he tells me he is innocent," said Jacques Collin, still addressing the gendarme.

Bipi-Lupin dared not answer for fear of being recognized.

"*Sempre mi*," replied Jacques Collin to Théodore, uttering their private password in his ear.

"*Sempre ti*," murmured the young man, giving the right reply. "Yes, you are indeed my *dâb*."

"Did you do the trick (commit the murder) ?"

"Yes."

"Tell me all, so that I may see how to save you. There is no time to lose. Charlot is here."

The Corsican at once knelt down at the priest's feet, and seemed about to confess. Bibi-Lupin was at a loss what to do, for the conversation was so rapid it took less time to carry it on than it does to read it. Théodore related all the circumstances of his crime, Jacques Collin being ignorant of them.

"The jury condemned me without proof," he said, in conclusion.

"Child, you are arguing when they are about to cut your hair!"

"I was really only chargeable with pawning the jewels. That's how people judge, — and in Paris, too!"

"How was it done?" asked Trompe-la-Mort.

"Ha! this way. Since I saw you I've made the acquaintance of a Corsican girl. I met her when I came to Paris."

"Men who are foolish enough to fall in love with women," exclaimed Jacques Collin, "perish that way. They are tigers out of cages,— tigers who gossip, and have looking-glasses. You were very foolish."

"But—"

"Go on; tell me what that damned woman did for you."

"That love of a woman — slim as an eel, active as a monkey — slipped through the top of the oven, and opened the door of the house to me. The dogs were poisoned. I chilled the two women. After we got the money and things, Ginetta locked the door, and got out through the oven."

"Such cleverness as that deserves to live," said Jacques Collin, admiring the workmanship of the crime as a carver admires a beautiful figurine.

"But I committed the folly of displaying all that cleverness for a paltry three thousand francs."

"No, for a woman!" said Jacques Collin. "I tell you they rob us of our intellects;" and he cast a look of sovereign contempt on Théodore.

"You were gone, and I had no one to look to," replied the Corsican.

"Do you love the girl?" asked Jacques Collin, somewhat moved by that appeal.

"Ah! if I live, I'd rather follow you than her."

"Well, make yourself easy; I am not named Trompe-la-Mort for nothing. I take upon myself to save you."

"What! my life?" cried the young Corsican, striving to raise his swaddled arms to the damp stone roof of his dungeon.

"My boy, you must be prepared to go back to the old galleys," continued Jacques Collin. "That can't be helped; you don't expect, do you, to be crowned with roses, like the carnival bull? If we are booked for Rochefort, it is because they want to get rid of us and kill us. But I'll try to get you sent to Toulon; there you can easily escape, and come back to Paris, where I will set you up in some nice little business."

A sigh such as those inflexible walls had seldom heard,—a sigh of happiness for deliverance beat upon the stone, which echoed back the sound to the ears of the bewildered Bibi-Lupin.

“ See the result of the absolution that I have promised him,” said Jacques Collin to the detective. “ These Corsicans, monsieur, are full of faith ! But he is as innocent of this crime as a child unborn ; and I shall now attempt to save him.”

“ God be with you, monsieur l’abbé,” said Théodore in French.

VI.

MADEMOISELLE COLLIN APPEARS UPON THE SCENE.

TROMPE-LA-MORT, more priestly than ever, hastened out of the condemned cell and through the corridor, to the director's office, where he played horror to Monsieur Gault most effectively.

"Monsieur le directeur, the young man is innocent; he has revealed to me the guilty person. He was about to die for a point of honor, like a true Corsican! I pray you ask the attorney-general to grant me an interview for five minutes. Monsieur de Granville will not refuse to listen immediately to a Spanish priest who has suffered so much himself from the mistakes of French law."

"I will go at once," replied Monsieur Gault, to the great astonishment of all present.

"But," said Jacques Collin, "will you kindly have me sent back to that yard in the mean time. There is a man there who had begun to confess himself when you sent for me; I desire to complete his conversion. Ah! those men have hearts."

This speech produced a stir among all the spectators of the extraordinary scene. The gendarmes, the turn-

keys, the jailers, Sanson himself, and his assistant who was waiting to "set up the machine," as the prison term is,—these persons, whom all ordinary emotions left untouched, were moved by a curiosity that is readily conceivable.

At this moment the noise of an equipage with spirited horses, pulled up on the quay before the outer gate of the Conciergerie, made itself heard. The carriage door was opened, and the steps let down in a manner to imply the arrival of a personage of importance. Presently a lady waving a blue paper presented herself at the gate of the *guichet*, followed by a footman and a *chasseur*. She was dressed in black, but very magnificently; a veil was over her bonnet, and she was stanching her tears with an embroidered handkerchief.

Jacques Collin instantly recognized Asia, or to give the woman at last her right name, Jacqueline Collin, his aunt. This wicked old woman, worthy of her nephew, held in her hand a permit granted the evening before to the waiting-maid of the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse, on the recommendation of the Comte de Sérizy, to communicate with Lucien de Rubempré and the Abbé Don Carlos Herrera so soon as the latter should be released from solitary confinement. On this order the chief of the department of prisons had written a few lines. The color of the paper was sufficient

to imply its importance; for these permissions, like gratis theatre-tickets, differ in form and color.

Consequently the gate-warder opened the two iron doors, especially after noticing the plumed *chasseur*, whose green and gold uniform, as dazzling as that of a Russian general, announced an aristocratic visitor with a blazon that was almost royal.

"Ah! my dear abbé," cried the false great lady, shedding a torrent of tears when she beheld the ecclesiastic. "How could they put so saintly a man here, even for a moment?"

The director took the permit and read the words, "On the recommendation of his Excellency the Comte de Sérizy.

"Ah! Madame di San-Esteban, Madame la marquise," said Carlos Herrera, "what noble devotion!"

"Madame, no communication is allowed with the prisoners in this place," said the good old Gault.

And he himself stopped the advance of the portly mass of black moire and lace.

"But at this distance," said Jacques Collin, "and before all present?" and he cast a circular glance around the assembly.

His aunt, whose dress must have amazed the whole office, director, jailers, and gendarmes, was redolent of musk. She wore, besides laces worth thousands of francs, a black cashmere shawl worth six thousand.

The *chasseur* paraded the court-yard of the Conciergerie with all the insolence of a lacquey who feels himself indispensable to a princess. He did not speak to the footman, who kept his station near the gate which opened upon the quay.

“What do you wish? what am I to do?” asked Madame di San Esteban, in the argot agreed upon between the aunt and nephew.

This argot consisted in giving terminations in *ar* or in *or*, or in *al* or in *i*, so as to make all words, either French or argot, unintelligible. It was the diplomatic cipher applied to language.

“Put all the letters in a sure place, take the most compromising, come back in rags to the Salle des Pas-perdus and wait my orders.”

Asia, that is, Jacqueline, knelt down as if to receive a benediction, and the false abbé blessed his aunt with evangelical unction.

“*Addio, marchesa,*” he said, adding rapidly in their own argot: “Find Europe and Paccard with the seven hundred thousand francs that they filched; I want them.”

“There’s Paccard,” replied the pious *marchesa*, looking toward the *chasseur* with tears in her eyes.

This readiness of comprehension brought not only a smile, but also an expression of surprise to the face of a man who could no longer be astonished by any one but his aunt. The false *marchesa* turned toward

the witnesses of this singular scene with the manner of a woman who is accustomed to take a position in the world.

"He is in despair at being unable to attend the obsequies of his child," she said in bad French; "for this frightful mistake of the police has brought to light his painful secret. I myself am now on my way to the mortuary mass. Here, monsieur," she added to Monsieur Gault, giving him a purse full of gold, "is something with which to comfort the poor prisoners."

"Famous move!" muttered her well-pleased nephew in her ear.

Jacques Collin then followed the jailer, who took him back into the *préau*.

Bidi-Lupin, in despair, having at last managed to attract the attention of the gendarme, to whom he *hemmed* significantly, was now released from the condemned cell. But he did not reach the office in time to see the great lady, who had by that time disappeared in her brilliant equipage.

"Three hundred *balles* [francs] for the prisoners!" said the head-jailer, showing Bibi-Lupin the purse which Monsieur Gault had given to his clerk.

"Let me see, Monsieur Jacometry," said Bibi-Lupin.

The head of the detective police took the purse, emptied the gold into his hand, and examined it attentively.

"It is really gold!" he said, "and the purse is blazoned. Ah, the scoundrel, how strong he is! He is armed at all points; he ought to be shot like a dog!"

"Why so?" asked the clerk, taking back the purse.

"That woman is, no doubt, a thief!" cried Bibi-Lupin, stamping with rage on the stone pavement of the *guichet*.

These words produced a sensation among the spectators grouped at a little distance from Monsieur Sanson, who still stood leaning with his back against the huge porcelain stove placed in the centre of that vaulted hall, where he awaited the order to make the criminal's "toilette" and set up the guillotine on the place de Grève.

As soon as Jacques Collin re-entered the *préau*, he walked toward the three *fanandels*.

"What have you got ahead of you?" he said to La Pouraille.

"I'm done for," replied the murderer, whom Jacques Collin led aside into a corner. "What I want now is a safe friend."

"Why?"

La Pouraille related in argot his various crimes, ending with the details of the murder and robbery of the Crottats.

"I respect you," said Jacques Collin; "the affair was well done. But you seem to me to have committed one mistake."

“ What was that ? ”

“ The matter once accomplished, you ought to have got a Russian passport, disguised yourself as a Russian prince, bought a carriage with a coat of arms, gone boldly to a banker and deposited your gold, and asked for a letter of credit on Hamburg, and then embarked for Mexico. With two hundred and eighty thousand francs in hand, a clever fellow like you could go where he chose and do as he liked, you simpleton ! ”

“ Ah ! you can have those ideas because you are *dâb* ; you never lose your head, not you ! But I — ”

“ Well, well, good advice to a man in your position is broth for the dead ! ” replied Jacques Collin, casting one of his compelling glances on the convict.

“ True,” said La Pouraille, doubtfully ; “ but give me the broth all the same. If it can’t nourish me, I can make a foot-bath of it.”

“ Here you are in the hands of the *Cicogne*, with five robberies, under aggravated circumstances, and three murders to answer for,— the last of which concerns two rich *bourgeois*. Jurors don’t like to have the *bourgeois* killed. You will certainly be *gerbé à la passe* ; there’s not the slightest hope for you.”

“ So they all tell me,” replied La Pouraille, ruefully.

“ My aunt Jacqueline, with whom I’ve just had a bit of a task before the whole *greffe*, and who is, you know, *la mère des fanandels*, told me that the

Cicogne wanted to get rid of you because you were dangerous."

"But," said La Pouraille, with a naïveté which proves how imbued robbers are with a sense of their *natural right* to rob, "I am rich now, why should they fear me any longer?"

"We have n't time to talk philosophy," replied Jacques Collin. "Come back to your situation —"

"What do you want to do with me?" asked La Pouraille, interrupting his *dâb*.

"You shall see; a dead dog is worth something."

"For others," said La Pouraille.

"I'll take you into my game," continued Jacques Collin.

"That's something," said the murderer. "What next?"

"I don't ask where your money is, but what you want to do with it?"

La Pouraille watched the impenetrable eye of his *dâb* as the latter continued, coldly: —

"Have you some *large* you love, or a child, or a *fanandel* to protect? I shall be at liberty very soon, and I can do everything for those you wish to benefit."

La Pouraille hesitated; he stood wavering with indecision. Jacques Collin brought forward a final argument.

"Your share in our funds is thirty thousand francs.

Do you want to leave it to the *fanandels*, or will you give it to some one else? The money is at hand, and I can pay it over to-night to any one you name."

La Pouraille let a movement of satisfaction escape him.

"I have him!" thought Jacques Collin. "But don't dawdle; think!" he continued, speaking into La Pouraille's ear. "*Mon vieux*, we have n't ten minutes to ourselves. The attorney-general will send for me; I am to have a conference with him. I hold him, that man! I can wring the neck of the Cicogne! I am certain of saving Théodore."

"If you can save Théodore, my *dâb*, you might save—"

"Don't waste your spittle," said Jacques Collin, curtly. "Make your will."

"Well, then," replied La Pouraille, piteously, "I want to leave the money to La Gonore—"

"*Tiens!* are you living with the widow of Moïse, that Jew who was at the head of the *rouleurs* (swindlers) of the South?" asked Jacques Collin.

Like all great generals, Trompe-la-Mort knew the personnel of all his troops.

"Herself," replied La Pouraille, much flattered.

"Pretty woman!" said Jacques Collin, who understood well how to manage his terrible machines. "Your *largeu* is shrewd; she knows what's what,—

an accomplished thief, and honest, too. Ha! so you have strengthened yourself with La Gonore, have you? A man's a fool to get himself *terrer* with such a *large* as that. Idiot! you ought to have bought a comfortable little business and jogged on together. *Et que goupine-t-elle?* (What is her line of robbery?)”

“ She has set up in the rue Sainte-Barbe, where she keeps a house.”

“ And you want to make her your heir? My dear fellow, that's what all these jades get out of us when we are fools enough to love them.”

“ But don't give her anything till I'm tumbled over.”

“ Sacredly not,” said Jacques Collin, in a serious tone. “ But the *fanandels*, nothing to them?”

“ Nothing; they sold me,” replied La Pouraille vindictively.

“ Who sold you! Do you want me to revenge you?” asked Jacques Collin, quickly, endeavoring to rouse the last sentiment that makes such hearts as these vibrate in crucial moments. “ Who knows, my old *fanandel*, whether by avenging you, I could n't make your peace with the *Cicogne*? ”

La Pouraille looked at his *dâb* with a stupefied air of happiness.

“ But,” replied the *dâb* to that speaking expression, “ I'm playing *mislocq* just now for Théodore. After

that farce succeeds, I am capable of much else for my friends,— and you are a friend of mine, old man!"

" If I see that you can get that ceremony for poor little Théodore put off only for a time, I'll do as you wish, there!"

" That's done already; I am certain of saving his *sorbonne* from the claws of the *Cicogne*. Those who want to *se désenflacquer* (get out of this scrape), La Pouraille, must all grasp hands. No one can act alone."

" That's true!" cried the murderer.

Confidence being thus established and La Pouraille's faith in his *dabb* becoming fanatic, he hesitated no longer; he revealed the secret of his accomplices,— a secret most carefully kept up to the present time. This was all that Jacques Collin wanted to know.

" Here's the *balle* (secret)," said La Pouraille. " Ruffard, Bibi-Lupin's agent, went thirds with me and Godet in the *poupon* (robbery long planned).

" Arrachelaine?" cried Jacques Collin, giving Ruffard his galley name.

" Yes. The villains sold me because I knew where their share was hidden, but they did not know about mine."

" You grease my boots, old fellow!" said Jacques Collin.

" How so?"

" Now," replied the *dabb*, " see what you gain by

trusting me, I make your vengeance a part of the game I am going to play. I don't ask to know where your money is ; you can tell me that at the last moment ; but tell me now all about Ruffard and Godet."

" You are, and you always will be, our *dâb* ; I shall have no further secrets from you. My money is in the *profonde* (cellar) of La Gonore's house."

" Are not you afraid to trust your *largeue* ? "

" Yah ! she does n't know anything about it," replied La Pouraille. " I made La Gonore drunk, — though she's a woman who would n't say a word *la tête dans la lunette* (in the last extremity). But so much gold, you know ! "

" Yes, that turns the milk of the purest conscience," replied Jacques Collin.

" So I could work without a *luisant* (eye) upon me ; the hens were all roosting. I buried the gold three feet down behind the wine bottles ; and I put a layer of cobblestones and mortar above it.

" Good ! " ejaculated Jacques Collin, " Where did the other two hide theirs ? "

" Ruffard has his *fade* (share of a robbery) at La Gonore's, in the poor woman's own room ; that's how he holds her ; he can prove she is an accomplice in receiving goods and send her to Saint-Lazare for the rest of her days."

" Ah ! the scoundrel ! How the *raille* (police) trains you to rob ! " cried Jacques Collin.

"Godet has put his *fade* with his sister, a clear-starcher, an honest girl who might get five years under lock and key without knowing why. He took up the tiles of the floor, put the money under, and cleared out."

"Do you know what I want of you?" said Jacques Collin, suddenly, casting one of his magnetic glances on La Pouraille.

"What?"

"I want you to take upon your own shoulders Théodore's affair."

La Pouraille gave a singular shrug with those shoulders, but instantly returned to a posture of obedience under the fixed glance of the *dâb's* eye.

"What! you snort already? Do you mean to thwart my game? Four murders or three, what's the difference?"

"Not much, perhaps."

"By the *meg* of the *fanandels!* you have n't any *raisiné* in your *vermicels* (blood in your veins). And I, who was thinking of saving you!"

"How?"

"Idiot! if you offer to return the money to the family, you'll get off with the *pré* for life. I would n't give a straw for your *sorbonne* if the money is kept; but don't you see, you fool, that you have the whole seven hundred thousand francs in your hands?"

“*Dâb, dâb!*” cried La Pouraille, in an ecstasy of joy.

“And besides that,” continued Jacques Collin, “we throw the murders upon Ruffard, and that will put an end to Bibi-Lupin. I have him!”

La Pouraille stood stupefied at the idea, rigid as a statue, his eyes widening. In prison for the last three months, about to appear before the court of assizes, advised by his friends in La Force, to whom he had not spoken of his accomplices, he was so wholly without hope after the preliminary examination into his crimes that such a plan of defence had never entered his imprisoned mind. This flicker of hope now made him almost imbecile.

“Can Ruffard and Godet have *fait la noce* (made a debauch of it)? Do you think their *jaunets* (yellow boys) have breathed the air?”

“They dare not. The villains are waiting till I’m mown,” replied La Pouraille. “That’s what my *lorgue* sent me word by La Biffe when she came to see Le Biffon.”

“Well, we shall have their *fades* within twenty-four hours!” cried Jacques Collin. “Those scoundrels can’t make restitution as you can; you’ll get off as white as snow, and they’ll be red with all the blood. I shall make you out an honest fellow misled by them. I have enough of your money in my hands to buy you

an alibi on the other charges, and once in the old *pré* — for, of course, you will have to go back there — you can manage to escape. It is a vile life, to be sure, but at any rate it is life."

La Pouraille's eyes expressed an inward delirium.

"Ah, old fellow!" said Jacques Collin, intoxicating his *fanandel* with hope, "seven hundred thousand francs is power — "

"*Dâb, dâb!*"

"I'll dazzle the attorney-general with it. Ha! Ruffard *dansera* (shall die of this); he's a *raille* to demolish. Bibi-Lupin is fried!"

"Then it's settled!" cried La Pouraille, with savage joy. "Order, and I obey."

He pressed Jacques Collin by the arm, with tears in his eyes, for it now seemed possible to him to save his head.

"But that's not all," said Jacques Collin. The *Cicogne* is slow of digestion, especially if there's a return of fever (revelation of new facts). The thing to be done now is to *servir de belle une largue* (bring a false charge against a woman)."

"How? and what's the good of that?"

"Help me, and you shall see," replied Trompe-la-Mort.

Jacques Collin then related briefly the circumstances of the crime committed by Théodore, and showed La

Pouraille the necessity of finding some woman who would consent to play the part of Ginetta. Then he went to Le Biffon, followed by La Pouraille, now supremely joyful.

“ I know how you love La Biffe,” said Jacques Collin.

The glance cast by Le Biffon was a dreadful poem.

“ What will she do while you are at the *pré*? ”

A tear moistened Le Biffon’s ferocious eyes.

“ Well, suppose I get her locked up at the Madelonnettes [female prison] for a year, which will just about cover the time of your trial, your return to the *pré*, and your escape? ”

“ You can’t do that miracle ; she is *nique de mèche* (not halves, without complicity), ” said La Biffe’s lover.

“ Ah, my Biffon ! ” cried La Pouraille, “ our *dâb* is more powerful than *meg*. ”

“ What is your password with her ? ” asked Jacques Collin, with the assurance of a master who will brook no refusal.

“ *Sorgue à Pantin* (night in Paris) ; say that, and she ’ll know you come from me. And if you want her to obey you, show her a *thune de cinq balles* (five-franc piece), and say the word ‘ *Tondif*? ’ ”

“ She will be condemned at La Pouraille’s trial, and released for confessing the matter after a year of *ombre* (shade, prison), ” said Collin, sententiously, with a glance at La Pouraille.

La Pouraille understood without further words the plan of his *dâb*, and promised him by a look to decide Le Biffon to help it by persuading La Biffe to accept a false complicity in the crime he was about to take upon his own shoulders.

"Adieu, my sons. You will soon hear that I have saved Théodore from Charlot's clutches," said Trompe-la-Mort. "Yes, Charlot was in the office with his men waiting to make Théodore's 'toilette,' as I passed through it 'There !'" he added presently, "they are coming to fetch me now; the *dâb of the Cicogne* (attorney-general) has sent for me."

A jailer came through the gate and made a sign to this extraordinary man, to whom the danger of the young Corsican and the idea of being able to save him, had restored the savage power with which he had warred against society for a lifetime.

Here is the proper moment to say that when the body of Lucien was taken from him, after those hours of mental torture, Jacques Collin had decided by a mighty resolution, to attempt a last incarnation, not into a being as in Lucien, but into a thing. He took the course which Napoleon so fatally took when he entered the boat that carried him to the "Belleroophon." By a singular combination of circumstances all things aided this genius of evil and corruption in his enterprise.

VII.

MADAME CAMUSOT PAYS THREE VISITS.

THOUGH the unexpected dénouement of this criminal life may lose somewhat of the marvellous (which in our day cannot be presented except by improbabilities which the mind rejects), it is necessary, before we enter, with Jacques Collin, the office of the attorney-general, to follow Madame Camusot in the visits which she made to certain persons while these events were taking place at the Conciergerie. One of the obligations which the historian of manners and morals should never disregard is that of not spoiling truth by arrangements apparently dramatic, above all when truth has taken pains to become romantic. The social nature, in Paris especially, involves such chances and changes, such entanglement of phases and events, all so capricious, that the imagination of tale-makers is constantly surpassed. The boldness of the Real produces combinations that are forbidden to Art; and so unreal and perhaps indecent do they often seem that a writer is forced to soften, prune, and even expurgate them.

Madame Camusot endeavored to make her morning toilet one of good taste,—a rather difficult matter for the wife of a judge who had lived the greater part of her life in the provinces. It was important, however, not to lay herself open to the criticism of the Marquise d'Espard and the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse, whom she proposed to visit between eight and nine o'clock in the morning. Amélie-Cécile Camusot, though *née* Thirion, let us hasten to say, succeeded partially. Is not that, in the matter of female dress, to fail twice?

People little know the utility of Parisian women to ambitious men of all kinds; they are as necessary in the great world as they are in the world of robbers, where, as we have just seen, they play an enormous part. For instance, suppose a man to be forced to speak within a given time to that all-powerful individual under the Restoration, the Keeper of the Seals, or else to be pushed back in the arena and remain in obscurity. Take a man in the most favorable circumstances,—a judge. He is obliged to get speech with the head of a department, or a private secretary, or the general secretary, and prove to him that there is some real reason why he should have an immediate audience. The Keeper of the Seals is never visible at a moment's notice. In the middle of the day, if he is not at the Chamber, he is at a council of ministers, or signing papers, or giving audience. In the morning he sleeps,

no one knows where. In the evening he has both his public and his private avocations. If all judges could claim audiences under any pretext whatever the chief law officer would be overwhelmed. The purpose and expediency of an interview is therefore subjected to the judgment of an intermediary power, who becomes an obstacle, a door to open, even if he is not already pledged to some other competitor. But a woman! she goes in search of another woman; she enters even bedrooms immediately; she awakens the curiosity of the mistress, sometimes that of the maid,—if the mistress appears to be under the spur of some great interest or pressing necessity. Call female power the Marquise d'Espard; this woman writes a little perfumed note which her footman carries to the minister's valet. The minister is caught by the billet as soon as he wakes, and he reads it at once. If he has affairs of interest on hand, he is delighted to pay a visit to one of the queens of Paris, a power of the faubourg Saint-Germain, one of the favorites of MADAME, or of the dauphiness, or the king. Casimir Perier, the only real minister the revolution of July produced, left all to pay a visit to a former first gentleman of the Bed-chamber to Charles X. This theory explains the result of Madame Camusot's visits.

“ Madame, Madame Camusot on a pressing matter, about which madame knows,” said the waiting-maid of

the Marquise d'Espard to her mistress whom she supposed to be awake.

The marquise called out that Madame Camusot was to be introduced at once. The judge's wife obtained immediate attention when she opened her business in these words :—

“ Madame la marquise, we are ruined for having avenged you.”

“ How is that, my dear ? ” replied the marquise, looking at Madame Camusot in the half-light produced by the opening of her bedroom door. “ Why, you are charming this morning, with that pretty little bonnet ! Where do you get such shapes ? ”

“ Madame, you are very good. But do you know that the manner in which Camusot examined Lucien de Rubempré reduced the young man to despair, and he has hanged himself in prison ? ”

“ What will Madame de Sérizy do ? ” cried the marquise, pretending ignorance in order to have the matter told to her again.

“ Alas, they say she is going mad ! ” replied Amélie. “ Ah, madame ! if you would only ask the Keeper of the Seals to summon my husband from the Palais immediately, by a courier, the minister would hear strange mysteries which he would certainly wish to tell to the king. In that way Camusot's enemies will be reduced to silence.”

"Who are Camusot's enemies?" asked the marquise.

"Why, the attorney-general, and now the Comte de Sérizy."

"Very good, my dear," replied Madame d'Espard, who owed her defeat in her shameful suit against her husband to Messieurs de Granville and de Sérizy. "I'll defend you. I don't forget either my friends or my enemies."

She rang, ordered the curtains opened, and a flood of light poured into the room. Then she asked for her desk, and rapidly scribbled a little note.

"Let Godet take a horse and carry this note at once to the Chancellerie; there is no answer," she said to her maid.

The maid left the room hastily, but she lingered outside the door for a few moments.

"You say there are mysteries?" said Madame d'Espard. "Tell me about them, my dear. Clotilde de Grandlieu is mixed up in the affair, is n't she?"

"Madame la marquise will hear all from his Excellency; my husband has told me nothing, except that he had incurred great danger. It would be better for us that Madame de Sérizy should die than remain insane."

"Poor woman!" said the marquise; "but she was already half-crazy."

Women of the world by their various ways of pro-

nouncing the same words will reveal to attentive observers the infinite extent and variation of those notes of music. The soul passes wholly into the voice as well as into the eyes; it imprints itself on the air as in the light,—the two elements in which the larynx and the eyes have play. In the accent of those words, “Poor woman!” the marquise revealed the contentment of her satisfied hatred, the happiness of triumph. ‘Ah, how many evils she had wished to Lucien’s protectress! Vengeance, which survives the death of a hated object, and is never quenched, inspires gloomy fear. Madame Camusot, whose own nature was harsh, spiteful, and quarrelsome, was shocked. Finding nothing to say, she was silent.

“Madame de Maufrigneuse told me that Léontine had gone to the prison,” continued Madame d’Espirad. “The dear duchess was in despair, for she is weak enough to be fond of Madame de Sérizy. But that’s conceivable, for they both adored that little fool of a Lucien; nothing unites, or disunites, two women like paying their devotions at the same altar.”

“They tried their best to save Lucien, madame; and it is because my husband did his duty that this danger threatens us. But he will tell all to the Keeper of the Seals. An examining judge is compelled to question prisoners privately within a time limited by law. It was absolutely necessary to examine Lucien;

the miserable youth did not understand that the inquiry was only formal, and he instantly made confession."

"He was always a fool, and very insolent," said Madame d'Espard, curtly.

The wife of the judge kept silence.

"Though we lost our case in the matter of the injunction, it was not Camusot's fault, and I shall never forget his services," said Madame d'Espard, after a pause. "It was Lucien, and Messieurs de Sérizy, Bauvan, and Granville, who defeated us. With time, God will be on my side. See! already those people are unhappy. Now, don't worry yourself. I will send the Chevalier d'Espard to the Keeper of the Seals to hasten him in sending for your husband, if you think it useful —"

"Oh, yes, madame!"

"Listen!" said the marquise. "I promise you the decoration of the Legion of honor immediately, — to-morrow! That will be a public testimony to your husband's conduct in this affair. Yes, it will be an additional blow on Lucien; it will show that he was guilty. People don't hang themselves for pleasure! Well, adieu, my dear."

Ten minutes later Madame Camusot was entering the bedroom of the beautiful Diane de Maufrigneuse, who was not asleep, though she had gone to bed at one o'clock. However insensible to feeling duchesses may

be, these women, even if their hearts are cased in stucco, cannot behold a friend in the paroxysms of madness without receiving a most painful impression. Moreover, the intimacy between Lucien and Diane, though slackened for the last eighteen months, had left memories enough in the mind of the duchess to make his dreadful death a terrible shock to her. Diane had seen a vision all night long of that beautiful being, so charming, so poetic, who knew so well how to make love, hanging, as Léontine had described him to her with the tones and gestures of delirium. She herself had eloquent, electrifying letters from Lucien, comparable to those written by Mirabeau to Sophie, but more literary, more carefully composed; for Lucien's letters were dictated by the most violent of all passions,—vanity!

“ And he died in a vile prison! ” she was saying to herself, clasping the letters in her hands with horror, as her maid softly tapped on the bedroom door.

“ Madame Camusot, on a matter of great importance, which concerns Madame la duchesse,” said the woman.

Diane sat upright, much startled.

“ Oh! ” she said, looking at Amélie, who assumed a face of anxiety as she glanced at the papers in Diane's hands,—oh, I know what you are here for! My letters! yes, my letters! ”

And she fell back upon the sofa. She suddenly remembered having replied to Lucien in his own key, chanting the poesy of the man as he had chanted the glories of the woman ; and in what dithyrambics !

“ Alas, yes, madame ! and I have come to save you from their consequences. Recover yourself, dress quickly, and let us go to the Duchesse de Grandlieu ; fortunately for you, you are not the only one compromised in this matter.”

“ But Léontine burned up yesterday at the Palais all the letters seized among poor Lucien’s papers, — at least, so I was told.”

“ But, madame, Lucien had a double in Jacques Collin,” cried the judge’s wife. “ You forget that wicked companionship, which was the only cause, really, of the death of that charming and regrettable young man. That Machiavelli of the galleys has not lost his head. Monsieur Camusot is certain from something that occurred that this monster keeps in some safe place the most compromising of the letters addressed to his — ”

“ Friend,” said the duchess, quickly. “ You are right, my dear ; we must go and take counsel with the Grandlieus. We are all interested in the affair ; and Monsieur de Sérizy will lend us a hand.”

Danger has, as we saw in the scenes at the Conciergerie, a virtue over the soul as great as that of

powerful reagents upon the body ; it is a moral Voltaic battery. Perhaps the day is not far distant when some discoverer will seize the method by which feeling condenses itself chemically into fluid, — possibly that of electricity.

Diane found her garments, and went about her toilet with the celerity of a grisette who acts as her own waiting-maid. This was so surprising that the duchess's maid stood motionless for a moment watching her mistress in her chemise, which allowed the judge's wife to see through a mist of transparent linen a white body as perfect as that of Canova's Venus. It was like a jewel in its tissue paper.

" You are the most beautiful woman I have ever seen ! " cried Amélie.

" Madame has n't her equal," said the maid.

" Nonsense, Josette ! hold your tongue," said the duchess. " Have you a carriage here ? " she asked of Madame Camusot, as she finished dressing. " Come, my dear ; we will talk as we drive along ; " and the duchess ran down the great staircase of the hôtel de Cadignan, putting on her gloves as she went along, — a thing that was never before seen.

" To the hôtel de Grandlieu, and quickly," she said to one of her servants, signing to him to get up behind.

The footman hesitated, for the vehicle was a hackney-coach.

" Ah ! Madame la duchesse, why did n't you tell me that young man had letters from you ? If I had known that, Camusot would have acted very differently."

" I entirely forgot it," replied the duchess, " Léontine's condition has so filled my mind. The poor woman was half-crazy before yesterday, and you can imagine the effect upon her of that fatal event. Ah, my dear, what a morning we had ! We were dragged, both of us, by a horrid old woman—an old-clothes dealer, but a *maîtresse-femme*—into that evil-smelling, bloody place they call the palace of Justice. I could n't help saying to her, ' I feel like falling on my knees, and crying out, as Madame de Nucingen did in one of those frightful storms of the Mediterranean, " O God ! save me now, if never again ! " ' Certainly, these last two days will shorten my life ! How silly we are to write letters ! But then, one has a heart, and we get pages which set it on fire through the eyes ; it flames up, prudence flies away, and we answer — "

" Why answer when you can speak ? " said Madame Camusot.

" Oh," said the duchess, proudly, " it is so fine to commit one's self ! That's a pleasure of the soul."

" Beautiful women," said Madame Camusot, modestly, " are excusable ; they have more occasions than we to compromise themselves."

The duchess laughed.

"Yes, we are much too generous," she said. "In future I shall do as that horrid Madame d'Espirard does."

"What is that?" asked Amelie, with curiosity.

"She writes a thousand love-letters —"

"As many as that!" cried Madame Camusot, interrupting the duchess.

"Yes, but there is n't a compromising phrase in the whole of them."

"You would be incapable of such coldness," responded Amélie.

"But I have vowed never again to write letters. In fact, I never did write, in all my life, except to that unhappy Lucien. I shall preserve his letters as long as I live! My dear, they are fire itself,—and one wants that sort of thing sometimes."

"But suppose they are found?" said the Camusot, with a frightened gesture.

"Oh! I should say they were parts of a novel. I copied them, my dear, and burned the originals."

"Oh, madame! as a reward for my little services let me read them."

"Well, perhaps I will," said the duchess. "And then you'll see that he did not write in the same way to Léontine."

The last words were the woman,—the woman of all times and all countries.

Like the frog in La Fontaine's fable, Madame Camrusot's skin was bursting with pleasure at the honor of entering the Grandlieu mansion in company with the beautiful and famous Diane de Maufrigneuse. She was about to form one of those connections so necessary to ambition. Already she heard herself called "Madame la présidente." She felt the ineffable joy of triumphing over immense obstacles, the chief of which was the incapacity of her husband, secret as yet to others, but well-known to her. To make an inferior man a success! this, to a woman as it is to kings, is a pleasure that seduces great actors, that of acting a bad play for the hundredth time. It is, as we may say, the intoxication of egotism, the saturnalia of power! Power cannot prove its force to itself unless by the singular abuse of crowning some absurdity with the palm of success, and in that way insulting genius, which is the only force which absolute power cannot attain. The promotion of the horse of Caligula, that imperial farce, has had, and ever will have, innumerable representations.

In a few moments Diane and Amélie had passed from the elegant disorder of the beautiful Diane's bedroom, to the correctness of a severe and grandiose luxury in the home of the Duchesse de Grandlieu. That extremely pious Portuguese lady always rose at eight in the morning to hear mass in the little church of

Sainte-Valère, a chapel of Saint-Thomas d'Aquin, then standing on the esplanade of the Invalides. The congregation of the little chapel, which is now demolished, has removed to the rue de Bourgogne, while awaiting the erection of a gothic church, which is to be, they say, dedicated to Sainte-Clotilde.

At the first words whispered into the Duchesse de Grandlieu's ear by Diane de Maufrigneuse, that excellent woman rose and went into the duke's study, from which she soon returned followed by her husband. The duke gave Madame Camusot one of those rapid looks by which great seigneurs analyze a whole existence and often the soul itself. Amélie's costume aided him not a little in penetrating that bourgeois life from Mantes to Alençon, and from Alençon to Paris.

Ah! if the judge's wife had been aware of this faculty of dukes, she could not have borne graciously that politely ironical glance, in which happily she saw nothing but politeness. Ignorance shares the privileges of shrewdness.

"This is Madame Camusot, the daughter of Thirion, one of the cabinet ushers," said the duchesse to her husband.

The duke bowed very politely, and his face lost something of its gravity. His valet, for whom he had rung, presented himself.

"Go to the rue Honoré-Chevalier; take a carriage.

Ring at a small door at number 10. You will say to the servant who opens the door that I beg his master to come here; if the master is at home, you will bring him back with you. Use my name and you will have no difficulty; try not to be more than fifteen minutes in doing all this."

Another valet, that of the duchess, appeared as the first one left the room.

"Go to the Duc de Chaulieu's and send in this card."

The duke gave the man a card folded in a certain manner. When these two intimates wished to meet immediately on some pressing, or mysterious affair, about which they preferred not to write, they notified one another in this way. Thus we see how customs resemble each other in all stages of society, and differ only in manners, methods, and shades. The great world has its argot, but there it is called *style*.

"Are you very sure, madame, of the existence of these letters said to be written by Mademoiselle de Grandlieu to that young man?" asked the duke.

"I have not seen them, but I fear they exist," she replied, trembling.

"My daughter cannot have written anything she would not acknowledge," exclaimed the duchess.

"Poor duchess!" thought Diane, giving the duke a glance that made him tremble.

"What do you think, my dear little Diane?" he whispered in her ear, taking her aside into the recess of a window.

"Clotilde was so in love with Lucien, dear, that she gave him an appointment before her departure. If it had n't been for that little Lenoncourt she might possibly have run away with him in the forest of Fontainebleau. I know that Lucien wrote passionate letters to Clotilde, enough to turn the head of a saint. We are three daughters of Eve in the toils of the serpent of correspondence."

The duke and Diane returned toward the duchess and Madame Camusot, who were talking in a low voice. Amélie, following a hint given to her by the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse, was posing as a *dévote* to gain the good-will of the pious Portuguese.

"We are at the mercy of an escaped convict!" said the duke, with a curious movement of his shoulders. "This is what comes of receiving in one's house persons of whom we are not absolutely sure. Before admitting any one, we ought to know his family, his fortune, and all his antecedents."

That sentence is the moral of this tale from the aristocratic point of view.

"Well, the thing is done," said the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse. "Let us think now of saving that poor Madame de Sérizy and Clotilde and myself."

“ We must wait for Henri. I have sent for him ; but all depends on the person whom Gentil has gone to fetch. God grant that he may be in Paris ! Madame,” he said, addressing Madame Camusot, “ I thank you for having thought of our interests.”

This was Madame Camusot’s dismissal. The daughter of the cabinet usher knew enough to understand the duke, and she rose ; but the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse, with that bewitching grace which won for her so many friends among all classes, took Amélie by the hand and presented her in a certain manner to the duke and duchess.

“ For my own sake,” she said, “ and not because she has been up since dawn endeavoring to save us all, I ask you for something more than a mere remembrance of my little Madame Camusot. In the first place, she has already rendered me services I can never forget ; and, besides that, she is absolutely devoted to our cause, both she and her husband. I have promised to advance her Camusot, and I beg you to protect him, in the first instance, for my sake.”

“ You did not need this recommendation,” said the duke to Madame Camusot. “ The Grandlieus never forget the services that are rendered to them. Before long, all persons attached to the king will have an occasion to distinguish themselves ; devotion will be asked of them. Your husband shall be put in the breach.”

Madame Camusot retired, proud, happy, and swelling almost to suffocation with delight. She returned home triumphant. She applauded herself; she scoffed at the enmity of the attorney-general. She even said to herself, "Suppose we get him dismissed?"

It was time that Madame Camusot retired, for as she left the house the Duc de Chaulieu, one of the king's favorites, encountered her on the portico.

"Henri," cried the Duc de Grandlieu, as soon as his friend was announced, "go to the château, I entreat you, and try to speak to the king about a matter I want to confide to you."

Then he drew him into the window where he had already talked with the heedless and gracious Diane. From time to time the Duc de Chaulieu glanced furtively at the lively duchess, who, while talking with the pious duchess and allowing herself to be lectured, returned the duke's glances with interest.

"Dear child," said the Duc de Grandlieu, when the private conference was over, "do be a little more careful! Come," he added, taking Diane's hands, "promise me to remember appearances. Don't compromise yourself again; never write letters. Letters, my dear, have caused as many private troubles as they have public evils. What might be pardonable in a young girl like Clotilde, in love for the first time, is inexcusable in —"

“ An old grenadier who has been under fire ! ” said the duchess, making a face at the duke. This joke and its attendant grimace brought a smile to the troubled faces of two dukes, and even to that of the excellent Duchesse de Grandlieu. “ But it is four whole years since I have written a love-letter ! Are we saved ? ” continued Diane, who hid a real anxiety under her playfulness.

“ Not yet,” replied the Duc de Chaulieu. “ You don’t know how difficult it is to commit an arbitrary act. For a constitutional king, it is like the infidelity of a married woman ; it is his adultery.”

“ His pet sin ! ” said the Duc de Grandlieu.

“ Forbidden fruit ! ” cried Diane, laughing. “ Oh, I wish I was he ! I have n’t any of it left,—that fruit ! I’ve eaten mine all up.”

“ My dear ! my dear ! ” said the pious duchess, “ you are going too far.”

The two dukes, hearing a carriage pulled up before the portico, with the noise which horses make when driven at speed, left the two women alone after bowing to them, and betook themselves to the duke’s study, where was presently introduced the personage from the rue Honoré-Chevalier, who was no other than the chief of the political police, the obscure but all-powerful Corentin.

“ Come in,” said the Duc de Grandlieu, “ come in, Monsieur de Saint-Denis.”

Corentin, surprised to find so good a memory in the duke, entered, and bowed profoundly to the two men.

"The present matter is about the same person, or because of him, my dear monsieur," said the Duc de Grandlieu.

"But he is dead," said Corentin.

"He had a companion who is alive," remarked the Duke de Chaulieu, "a tough companion."

"The convict, Jacques Collin," replied Corentin.

"Speak, Ferdinand; relate the facts," said the Duc de Chaulieu to his friend.

"That wretch is much to be feared," said the Duc de Grandlieu. "He seems to hold, in order to obtain a ransom, letters which Mesdames de Sérizy and de Maufrigneuse had written to this Lucien Chardon, his dependent. Apparently it was systematic on the part of that young man to obtain emotional letters in exchange for his own; for my daughter, Mademoiselle de Grandlieu has written, they say, several,—or at any rate, they fear so. We cannot know how that may be, for she is now on a journey."

"That foolish young man," said Corentin, "was incapable of any such scheme. It is a precaution taken by the abbé, Carlos Herrera."

Corentin rested his elbow on the arm of the chair in which he was sitting and put his head in his hand to reflect.

“ Money?” he said; “ why, the man has more than we have. Esther Gobseck served him as a bait to fish two millions out of that pond of gold called Nucingen. Messieurs, give me full powers and I will rid you of that fellow.”

“ But — the letters?” said both dukes together.

“ Listen, messieurs,” continued Corentin, rising and showing his crafty face in a state of ebullition. He shoved his hands into the pockets of his black flannel trousers. This great actor in the historical drama of our day had merely slipped on a coat and waistcoat, not waiting to change his morning trousers, knowing well that great personages are grateful for promptitude under certain circumstances. He now walked familiarly up and down the duke’s study, discussing the matter aloud as if he were alone: —

“ He is a convict; we can fling him, without trial, into solitary confinement at Bicêtre; without any possible communications; it would soon kill him. But he may have given instructions to some of his followers, foreseeing that very thing.”

“ He was put in solitary confinement at once, as soon as he was found in the house of that courtesan,” said the Duc de Grandlieu.

“ There’s no such thing as solitary confinement in Paris for a determined fellow like him,” replied Corentin. “ He’s as powerful as, — as I am!”

"What's to be done?" asked the dukes of each other in a glance.

"We can send him back to the galleys at once," went on Corentin. "At Rochefort, he'll be dead in six months — Oh! without a crime," he added, replying to a gesture of the Duc de Chaulieu. "It could n't be prevented. A convict can't hold out longer than six months of a hot summer if he is made to really work in the malarial swamps of the Charente. But that would n't do in case he has already taken precautions about these letters. If the rascal distrusts his adversaries, and there's little doubt he does, we must find out what and where those precautions are. If the person who holds the letters is poor, of course he is corruptible — The thing is to make Jacques Collin talk! What a duel! I should be worsted! It would be better to buy those papers by other papers, — an official pardon, — and give me that man in my squad. Jacques Collin is the only man I know capable of succeeding me, now that poor Contenson and that dear Peyrade are dead, — Messieurs, you will have to give me carte-blanche. Jacques Collin is at the Conciergerie. I'll go and see Monsieur de Granville at his office. Send some confidential person to meet me there. Monsieur de Granville does not know me, and I must therefore have either a letter of introduction or some imposing person to introduce me. You have

half an hour in which to arrange this, for it will take me that time to dress, or rather to become what I must be to the eyes of the attorney-general."

"Monsieur," said the Duc de Chaulieu, "I know your wonderful ability; and I only ask you for an answer, yes or no. Do you answer for success?"

"Yes,—if allowed full powers, and if you give me your word never to question me on this subject. My plan is made."

This mysterious answer made the two great seigneurs shudder slightly.

"Go on, monsieur," said the Duc de Chaulieu, "and charge your expenses to the usual account."

Corentin bowed and left the room.

Henri de Lenoncourt, for whom Ferdinand de Grandlieu ordered a carriage to be brought round, went at once to the king, whom he was able to see at all times, owing to the privileges of his office.

VIII.

THE SUFFERINGS OF AN ATTORNEY-GENERAL.

THUS we see that all these interests, tangled together, in the lowest and the highest walks of life, were about to meet in the office of the attorney-general,— brought there by necessity, and represented by three men: law and justice by Monsieur de Granville, the family by Corentin; both confronted by their terrible adversary Jacques Collin, the representative of Evil in all its savage energy.

What a duel this between justice and authority, the galley and craft! — the galley, that symbol of audacity which represses calculation and reflection, to which all means are good, which is devoid of the hypocrisy of power, which symbolizes hideously the interests of the famished stomach, the bloody, headlong protestation of hunger! Here is the offensive and the defensive, robbery and property, the terrible question of the social state and the natural state decided, but not argued, in the narrowest possible space,— in short, a fearful, living image of those antisocial compromises which

feeble representatives of power have made with savage outlaws.

When Monsieur Camusot was announced to the attorney-general, the latter made a sign that he should be admitted. Monsieur de Granville, who expected the visit, was anxious to come to an understanding with the judge as to the manner in which the affair of Lucien should be terminated. The arrangement made between himself and Camusot on the previous evening, before the death of the unhappy poet, of course was at an end.

“Sit down, Monsieur Camusot,” said the attorney-general, dropping into his own arm-chair.

Alone with the judge, he allowed his depression to be visible. Camusot looked at him, and saw on that firm face a pallor that was almost livid, and an utter fatigue, — a total prostration, which revealed more cruel sufferings than, perhaps, those of the man condemned to death who had just listened to the rejection of his appeal for mercy ; and yet that rejection meant, “Prepare to die, for your last hour has come.”

“Shall I return later, Monsieur le comte, — though the matter is certainly urgent?”

“No, remain,” replied the attorney-general, with dignity. “A loyal magistrate, monsieur, must accept his trials, and know how to bear them. I did wrong to let you see that I am troubled — ”

Camusot made a gesture.

"God grant that you may never know, Monsieur Camusot, these extreme necessities of our life; one might die of a lesser suffering! I have just spent the night with one of my intimate friends; I have but two friends,—Comte Octave de Bauvan and the Comte de Sérizy. From six o'clock last evening to six this morning we passed, all three in turn, from the salon to the bedside of Madame de Sérizy, expecting each time to find her dead or a maniac. Desplein, Bianchon, and Sinard, with two nurses, did not leave her. The count adores his wife. Think what a night it was! A statesman is never desperate like an imbecile. Sérizy, as calm as he is in the Council chamber, writhed in his chair that he might show us a tranquil face; but the sweat rolled from his brow. I have slept from six to half-past seven, overcome with watching; yet I had to be here at half-past eight to order an execution! Believe me, Monsieur Camusot, when a magistrate has passed a night in the midst of sorrows, and felt the hand of God heavy on all things human, striking down the noblest hearts, it is difficult for him to sit here before his desk and say, 'Let that head fall at four o'clock! Annihilate a creature of God who is full of life and force and health.' And yet that is my duty! Overcome with grief, I must now set up a scaffold. A condemned man does not know that the magistrate who

condemns him suffers an agony almost equal to his own. At this moment, bound together by a sheet of paper, I, Society avenging itself, he, Crime about to be expiated,— we are both Duty, with two sides, two existences held together for an instant by the sword of the law. These heavy griefs of a magistrate, who pities them? who consoles them? Our glory is to bury them in the depths of our hearts. The priest, whose life is an offering to God; the soldier, whose thousand deaths are given to his country, seem to me far happier than the magistrate, with his doubts, his fears, his terrible responsibility. Do you know the man who is to be executed to-day?" continued the attorney-general. "A young man of twenty-seven, handsome as the one who killed himself yesterday, fair as he,—one whose head we are taking off against all expectation, for the only positive proof against him is of possessing stolen property. Since his condemnation, he refuses to confess. For seventy days he has resisted every effort, and declares himself innocent. For two months I have had two heads upon my shoulders! Oh! I'd give a year of my own life to obtain his confession, if only to reassure the jury. Think what an injury it would be to law and justice should it be discovered too late that another had committed the crime! The jury—that institution which revolutionary legislators have thought so strong—is an element of social ruin, for it fails in

its mission ; it does not sufficiently protect society. The jury plays with its functions. The jurors divide themselves into two camps, one of which is against the death penalty ; from this results the total overthrow of equality before the law.. A certain horrible crime (parricide) obtains in one department a verdict of *non-culpabilité*, while in another some far less heinous crime is punished by death.¹ What would happen if here in Paris we were to execute an innocent man ? ”

“ He is an escaped convict,” remarked Camusot, timidly.

“ He would become a paschal lamb in the hands of the Opposition and the press ! ” cried Monsieur de Granville. “ And the Opposition would have a fine game to play in whitening him ; for he is a Corsican, fanatical as to the ideas of his country. His crimes are mostly the result of a *vendetta*. In that island they kill their enemies, and think themselves, and are thought by others, honorable men. Ah, loyal magistrates are most unfortunate ! They ought to live apart from all society, as pontiffs used to do. The world would then see them issuing from their cells at certain fixed hours, grave, venerable, sitting in judgment like the high-priesthood of the ancients, which united in itself the

¹ At the present time [1843] there are at the galleys twenty-three parricides to whom have been granted the benefits of “extenuating circumstances.”

sacerdotal power and the judicial power. We should then be seen in our vocation only ; now all the world may see us suffering, or diverting ourselves like other men. It beholds us in salons, in our homes, as citizens, full of passions, often grotesque instead of being terrible."

This passionate cry, broken by pauses and interjections and accompanied by gestures which gave it an eloquence not transferable to paper, made Camusot quiver.

"I, myself, monsieur," he said, "began my apprenticeship in the sufferings of our calling yesterday. I have almost died of the death of that young man. He did not understand my good intentions to him ; the unfortunate fellow did the harm to himself."

"Ah ! he ought not to have been examined !" cried Monsieur de Granville. "It is so easy to do a service by abstaining from doing anything."

"But the law ?" said Camusot. "It was two days since his arrest."

"The harm is done," said the attorney-general. "I have repaired as best I could what is, in truth, irreparable. My carriage and servants are now following the hearse of that poor weak poet. Sérizy has done even more ; he accepts the duty of being his executor ; and the Comte de Bauvan has gone in person to the funeral."

"Well, Monsieur le comte," said Camusot, "then let us finish the matter now. We still have a very dangerous prisoner on our hands. He is, as you know, Jacques Collin. This wretch cannot fail to be recognized —"

"Then we are lost!" exclaimed Monsieur de Granville.

"He is at this moment with the man condemned to death, who was formerly his chain companion at the galleys; he protected him as he has since protected Lucien. Bibi-Lupin has disguised himself as a gendarme in order to be present at the interview."

"Why does the detective police meddle in the matter?" cried the attorney-general. "It ought to act under my orders only."

"All the Conciergerie will know that we have caught Jacques Collin. Well, I have come here to tell you that this bold criminal undoubtedly possesses certain dangerous letters in Lucien's correspondence with Madame de Sérizy, the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse, and Mademoiselle Clotilde de Grandlieu."

"Are you sure of that?" asked Monsieur de Granville, betraying on his face a pained surprise.

"You can judge for yourself what cause there is to fear. As I opened and laid upon my table the bundle of letters taken from Lucien's apartments, Jacques Collin cast an incisive glance over the papers and then

let a smile of satisfaction escape him ; no judge could fail to understand the significance of that smile. A scoundrel as wary as Jacques Collin would be careful not to drop such a weapon as compromising letters. What use, think you, his lawyer (whom he'll certainly choose among the enemies of the government and the aristocracy) will make of those documents ? My wife, to whom the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse has shown much kindness, has gone to warn her, and they will probably go together to the Grandlieu's to consult them."

"The trial of that man is impossible !" cried the attorney-general, rising and walking up and down his office with great strides. "He has undoubtedly put those letters in some safe place."

"I know where," said Camusot. With those three words, he effaced from the attorney-general's mind the prejudice which that official felt against him.

"Explain," said Monsieur de Granville, sitting down.

"On my way to the Palace this morning I reflected deeply on this painful affair. Jacques Collin has an aunt, a blood-relation, a woman about whom the political police sent a memorandum to the prefecture. He is the pupil and the idol of that woman, who is the sister of his father and is named Jacqueline Collin. This creature has an establishment of *marchande de toilette*, and, by help of this business, she obtains a knowledge of many family secrets. If Jacques Collin

has confided those papers to the care of any one, it is to that woman. Let us arrest her."

The attorney-general cast a glance at Camusot which seemed to say: "The man is not such a fool as I thought him; but he is young at the work; he does not know how to hold the reins of the law."

"But," said Camusot, continuing, "in order to succeed we must change all the measures we took yesterday; and I have come to ask your advice,—your orders."

The attorney-general took up his paper-knife and began to tap gently on the edge of his table with one of those motions common to thinkers when they give themselves up to reflection.

"Three great families in peril!" he cried; "no blunder must be made. You are right; let us follow Fouché's maxim and arrest. Jacques Collin must be sent back to solitary confinement instantly."

"But that is admitting him to be the ex-convict; it will ruin Lucien's memory."

"What a frightful situation!" said Monsieur de Granville; "danger on all sides."

At this instant the director of the Conciergerie appeared, but not without rapping. An office like that of the attorney-général is so well guarded that persons belonging to the Parquet can alone reach the door to rap there.

“Monsieur le comte,” said Monsieur Gault, “the accused person, who goes by the name of Carlos Herrera, asks to speak with you.”

“Has he communicated with any one?”

“With the other prisoners; he has been in the *préau* since half-past seven o’clock. He has also seen the condemned man, who seems to have *talked* to him.”

Monsieur de Granville, on a word from Camusot, which struck him like a flash of light, saw the chance offered by Jacques Collin’s intimacy with Théodore Calvi to obtain the letters. Glad of a reason to postpone the execution, he called Monsieur Gault to his side with a motion of his hand.

“My intention is,” he said, “to put off the execution till to-morrow; but I do not wish this to be suspected at the Conciergerie. Keep absolute silence, therefore. Let the executioner appear to go on with the preparations. Send the Spanish priest here carefully guarded; the Spanish embassy claims him. The gendarmes are to bring Don Carlos by your private staircase, so that he may see no one on the way. Warn the men who bring him as to this. Two are to hold him,—one by each arm; and they are not to loose him for an instant until they reach the door of this office. Are you sure, Monsieur Gault, that this dangerous foreigner has communicated with no one except the prisoners?”

"Ah! just as he left the condemned cell a lady arrived to see him —"

Here the two magistrates exchanged a look.

"What lady?" asked Camusot.

"One of his penitents,— a marquise," replied Monsieur Gault.

"Worse and worse!" cried Monsieur de Granville, looking at Camusot.

"She dazzled the gendarmes and jailers," said Monsieur Gault, puzzled.

"Nothing is unimportant in your functions," said the attorney-general, sternly. "The Conciergerie is not walled as it is for nothing. How did that lady enter?"

"With a proper permit, monsieur," replied the director. "The lady, who was handsomely dressed, came in a fine equipage, with a *chasseur* and footman. She wished to see her confessor before going to the funeral of that unhappy young man whose body you sent to his late home."

"Bring me that permit from the prefect," said Monsieur de Granville.

"It was granted on the recommendation of his Excellency the Comte de Sérizy."

"What was the woman like?" asked the attorney-general.

"She appeared to be a well-bred woman."

“ Did you see her face ? ”

“ She wore a black veil.”

“ What did they say to each other ? ”

“ A *dévote* with a prayer-book,— what should they say ? She asked for the abbé’s blessing, and went down on her knees.”

“ Did they talk long ? ”

“ About a minute ; but none of us understood what they said. They appeared to speak in Spanish.”

“ Tell us all, monsieur,” said the attorney-general. “ I repeat, that the slightest detail is of importance to us. Let this be a warning to you.”

“ She wept, monsieur.”

“ Real tears ? ”

“ That we could not see ; her face was hidden in her handkerchief. She left three hundred francs in gold for the prisoners.”

“ Then it was not she ! ” cried Camusot.

“ Bibi-Lupin cried out, when he heard of it, that she was certainly a thief,” said Monsieur Gault.

“ He ought to know,” said Monsieur de Granville. “ Issue that warrant,” he added, looking at Camusot, “ and quickly ; put the seals on her domicile at once. But how did she get the recommendation from Monsieur de Sérizy ? Bring me that permit from the prefecture. Go, Monsieur Gault, and send the abbé here at once. As long as we have him in prison the danger

cannot increase; and in two hours' conversation we can often make much way in a man's soul."

"Especially an attorney-general like you," said Camusot, artfully.

"We shall be two on this occasion," returned the attorney-general, politely. Then he resumed his reflections.

"There ought to be attached to all prisons, which have parlors, a proper superintendent of visitors, with a good salary, and retiring pension for the cleverest of them," he said, after a long pause. "Bibi-Lupin might finish his days there. We should thus have an eye and an ear in a place which wants far more watching than it ever gets. Monsieur Gault has told us nothing decisive."

"He is so busy," said Camusot. "But there is a great gulf between us and the prisoners in solitary confinement which ought not to exist. To get from the cells of the Conciergerie to our offices, prisoners have to be brought through the corridors and the court-yard, and up the stairway. The attention of the guard cannot be perpetually on the criminal; whereas, the criminal is thinking all the time of his affair. I have been told that a lady had already met Jacques Collin when he was on his way to me for examination. This woman got as far as the guard-room of the gendarmes at the top of the staircase from the Souricière. The ushers

told me so ; and I rebuked the gendarmes for allowing it."

" Oh ! the Palais ought to be rebuilt entirely," said Monsieur de Granville ; " but it would cost from twenty to thirty millions. Ask the Chambers for thirty millions for the good of the Law ! "

The steps of several persons coming up the corridor and the rattle of arms was heard. No doubt it was Jacques Collin, with his guard.

The attorney-general put a mask of gravity on his face, behind which the man disappeared. Camusot imitated the head of the Parquet.

IX.

CRIME AND JUSTICE TÊTE À TÊTE.

THE office-servant opened the door, and Jacques Collin appeared, calm and imperturbable.

" You have asked to speak to me," said the attorney-general. " I will listen to you."

" Monsieur le comte, I am Jacques Collin, and I surrender."

Camusot quivered, the attorney-general remained calm.

" You will, of course, suppose that I have motives for thus acting," went on Jacques Collin, holding the two magistrates by his mocking eye. " I must embarrass you immensely; for, while I continued a Spanish priest, you had only to send me with an escort of gendarmes across the frontier at Bayonne, and there the Spanish bayonets would have rid you of me."

The two magistrates remained silent and impassible.

" Monsieur le comte," continued the convict, " the reasons that impel me to act thus are serious, although they are devilishly personal to myself. But I can tell them only to you; and if you are afraid — "

" Afraid of whom,—of what?" said the Comte de

Granville. The attitude, countenance, carriage of the head, the gesture, the glance of this great magistrate, made him at that moment a living embodiment of the Magistracy which is in duty bound to offer noble examples of civil courage. In this passing moment he rose to the height of the old magistrates of the ancient parliament in the days of the civil wars, when judges found themselves face to face with death, and stood like the marble of the statues that were afterwards erected to them.

“Afraid of being alone with an escaped convict.”

“Leave us, Monsieur Camusot,” said the attorney-general, quickly.

“I wished to propose that you should bind me hand and foot,” continued Jacques Collin, coldly, enfolding the two magistrates in a potential look. He paused, and then said, gravely, “Monsieur le comte, I esteemed you only, but now you have my admiration.”

“Do you think yourself so formidable?” asked the magistrate, in a tone of contempt.

“Think myself formidable!” replied the convict. “Why should I? I am, and I know it.”

He took a chair and sat down with all the ease of a man who feels himself on a level with his adversary in a conference of one power with another power.

“At this moment Monsieur Camusot, who had reached the threshold of the door, and was about to

close it, returned to Monsieur de Granville, and gave him two papers, folded.

"See!" he said to the attorney-general, pointing to one of the papers.

"Call back Monsieur Gault," cried the Comte de Granville, as soon as he had read (on the permit the director had brought to him) the name of the maid of the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse, who was known to him.

The director entered.

"Describe to me the woman who presented this permit," said the attorney-general in a low voice to the director.

"Short, stout, and stocky," replied Monsieur Gault.

"The person for whom this permit was given is tall and slight," said Monsieur de Granville. "How old was she?"

"About sixty."

"Does this concern me, messieurs?" said Jacques Collin. "Come," he added, frankly, "you need n't look further. That person was my aunt, an old woman. I can save you a great deal of trouble. You cannot find my aunt unless I choose. If we paddle about in this way, we shall never come to any result."

"Monsieur l'abbé no longer speaks broken French," remarked Monsieur Gault.

"Because everything is broken enough, my dear

Monsieur Gault," replied Jacques Collin, with a bitter smile.

Monsieur Gault went hurriedly up to the attorney-general and whispered in his ear: "Be careful of yourself, Monsieur le comte; that man is in a fury."

Monsieur de Granville looked slowly at Jacques Collin, and thought him calm; but he presently perceived the truth of what the director had said. That misleading calmness covered the cold and terrible irritation of the nerves of a savage. In the convict's eye smouldered a volcanic eruption, his fists were tightly closed. It was indeed a tiger gathering itself up to spring upon its prey.

"Leave us," said the attorney-general, gravely, addressing the director and the judge.

"You did well to send away Lucien's murderer," said Jacques Collin, not caring whether Camusot heard him or not. "I could not have borne it longer; I should have strangled him."

Monsieur de Granville shuddered. Never had he seen so much blood in the eyes of a man, so much pallor on the cheeks, so much sweat on the brow, or such contraction of the muscles.

"What good would that murder have done you?" he said tranquilly to the criminal before him.

"You avenge — or think you avenge — society every day, monsieur, and yet you ask me the reason

of a vengeance! Have you never felt Revenge turning its blades in your bosom? Are you ignorant that that man, that imbecile judge, killed our dear one,—for you loved him, my Lucien, and he loved you! I know you by heart, monsieur. Every night that dear child told me all when he came home to me. I put him to bed, as a nurse her nursling; and I made him relate all that happened. He confided to me everything, even to his least sensations. Ah! no good mother ever loved her only son as I loved that dear angel. Oh! if you had known him as I knew him! Good sprang up in that heart as the flower in the fields. He was weak,—that was his one defect; weak as the strings of a lute, strong only in bending. But such are the lovable natures! their weakness is tenderness, the faculty of unfolding to the sun of art, of love, of the beautiful which God has given to man under myriad forms! Lucien was half a woman. Ah! what did I not say to that brute beast who has just gone from here? Monsieur, I did, in my place as prisoner before a judge, what God himself might have done to save his son, had he so willed it, from Pontius Pilate."

A torrent of tears burst from the clear and yellow eyes that lately flamed like those of a famished wolf after six months prowling on the snows of the Ukraine. Presently he continued: —

"The booby would not listen to me, and he destroyed my child! Monsieur, I washed that body with my tears, imploring *Him I do not know*, who is above us. That tells you all in a word,—for I believe not in God; I could not be what I am, unless I were materialist. You do not know, no man knows what sorrow is; I alone know it. The fire of grief had so dried up my tears that I could not weep last night. But now I weep, for I feel that you understand me. I saw you there, just now, holding the scales of justice — Ah! monsieur, ask God, in whom I am tempted to believe, ask God to spare you sufferings like mine. That cursèd judge has robbed me of my soul. Monsieur! monsieur! they are burying at this moment my life, my beauty, my virtue, my conscience, my strength! Did you ever see a dog from which a surgeon drains its blood? behold me in that dog! This is why I have come to say to you, 'I am Jacques Collin, and I give myself up.' I had resolved to do so this morning when they tore that body from me. I determined then to give myself up to justice without conditions. But I have changed my mind; now I must make some; you shall know why."

"Are you speaking to Monsieur de Granville or to the attorney-general?" said the count.

The two men, Crime and Justice, looked at each other. The convict's words had deeply moved the

magistrate, who was seized with a divine pity for that unhappy man ; he came to a perception of his life and of his feelings. Thus impressed, the magistrate (for a magistrate is always a magistrate) to whom Jacques Collin's life since his escape was unknown, thought that he might make himself master of this criminal who was, after all, only guilty of forgery. It occurred to him to try generosity on that complex nature, composed like bronze of divers metals, of good and evil. Monsieur de Granville who had reached the age of fifty-two without ever being able to inspire affection, admired tender natures, like all men who have not been loved. Perhaps this despair, the lot of many men to whom women will give only esteem or friendship, was the secret of the tie between the three friends, de Bauvan, de Granville, de Sérizy ; for mutual sorrow like mutual happiness, tunes all souls to the same diapason.

" You have a future," said the attorney-general, with a penetrating glance at the humbled criminal.

The man answered with a gesture that expressed the profoundest indifference to himself.

" Lucien leaves a will in which he bequeaths you three hundred thousand francs."

" Poor boy ! ah, my poor boy !" exclaimed Jacques Collin, " always *too* honest ! I was every evil thing ; he was good, noble, beautiful, sublime ! Such glorious souls cannot be injured ; he never derived anything from me, monsieur, — except my money."

This utter abandonment of his own personality, which the magistrate was unable to arouse, proved the sincerity of the man's words so forcibly that Monsieur de Granville went over to his side completely. The attorney-general alone remained against him.

"If nothing can interest you personally any more, why are you here, and what have you come to say to me?" asked Monsieur de Granville.

"I came to deliver myself up; that is something, is it not? You *burned*, but you had not found me. And if you had, I should only have embarrassed you."

"What an adversary!" thought the attorney-general.

"You are about to cut off the head of an innocent man, monsieur; and I have found the guilty persons," said Jacques Collin, gravely. "But I am not here for him more than for you. I wish to save you from remorse, for I love all those who bore my Lucien goodwill, just as my hatred will forever follow those, be they men or women, who hindered him from living. What's a convict to me!" he exclaimed, after a slight pause. "A convict to my eyes is what an ant is to yours. I'm like the brigands of Italy,—fine fellows, they!—if only a traveller brings them in something more than the cost of the powder and shot, they shoot him. In this matter I have only thought of you. I have made that young man, Théodore Calvi, confess;

I was the only person he could trust, for he used to be my chain companion. He has a kind nature, and he meant to do a service to his mistress in selling the stolen goods. But he was no more criminal in the Nanterre affair than you are. He is a Corsican ; it is their morality to avenge themselves, and to kill one another like flies. In Spain and Italy life is not respected ; and the reason is simple enough. There they believe in a soul, a spirit, a something which survives eternally. Go and tell that pretty tale to the historians ! There are other lands, philosophical and atheistical, which make men pay dear for meddling with human life ; and they are right, because they only believe in Matter in this present world. If Calvi," continued Jacques Collin, "had told you the name of the woman from whom he got the stolen things, you would have found, not the real culprit, for he is already in your hands, but an accomplice Théodore does not want to injure, for she is a woman. Now, I know the murderer and the managers of this bold and skilful crime, which has been related to me in all its details. Put off Calvi's execution, and you shall know all ; but give me your word to commute the death penalty, and send him back to the galleys. In the sorrow in which I now am, I cannot play a part, as you must know."

" With you, Jacques Collin, I think I am at liberty to relax the rigor of my office, although it may some-

what lower justice and the law, which ought never to make compromises."

" Will you grant me that life?"

" Possibly."

" Monsieur, I implore you to give me your word; that will suffice me."

Monsieur de Granville made a gesture of offended dignity.

" I hold the honor of three great families in my hands," said Jacques Collin; " all you hold are the lives of three convicts. I am the stronger."

" You may be returned to solitary confinement; what will you do then?" asked the attorney-general.

" Ah ça! are we playing a game?" cried Jacques Collin. " I was speaking frankly to Monsieur de Granville; but if the attorney-general is here, I take back my cards and am dumb,—just as I was about, had you given me your word, to offer you the letters written to Lucien by Mademoiselle Clotilde de Grandlieu."

The words were said with a cool composure of look and tone which warned Monsieur de Granville that here was an adversary with whom the slightest blunder was dangerous.

" Is that all you have to ask?" said the attorney-general.

" I am about to speak to you of myself," said Jacques

Collin. “The honor of the family of Grandlieu pays for the commutation of Théodore’s sentence. It is giving much and receiving little ; for what’s a galley-slave condemned for life ! If he attempts to escape you shoot him ; it is only a bill of exchange upon the guillotine. Promise me to send him to Toulon, and give orders that he shall be well treated, or they might pack him off to Rochefort, intending to get rid of him in six months. Now, for myself I want more. I have certain letters of Madame de Sérizy, and others of the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse,— and what letters ! These little duchesses and countesses, whose heads are so virile, can write masterpieces of another kind when they choose. These are as fine from end to end as the famous ode of Piron — ”

“ Really ? ”

“ Should you like to see them ? ” said Jacques Collin, smiling.

The magistrate felt ashamed.

“ I can let you read them, but no nonsense about it ! We are playing a fair game, are not we ? You are to give me back the letters, and you must forbid that the person who brings them shall be watched, or followed, or even looked at.”

“ But it will take time to get them,” said the attorney-general.

“ No, it is half-past nine,” said Jacques Collin,

glancing at the clock. “ Well, in four minutes you shall have a letter from each of those ladies, and after having read them you must countermand the guillotine. If I could n’t do all this, I should n’t be as calm as you now see me. Moreover, those ladies have been warned already.”

Monsieur de Granville made a gesture of surprise.

“ They are already in motion; the Keeper of the Seals has been set to work, and they may go, who knows? to the king. Come, give me your word to take no notice of who comes here, and not to allow that person to be followed.”

“ I give you my word.”

“ Good; I know you,—you are above deceiving an escaped convict. You are of the wood Turennes are made of, and you would keep your word to a thief. Well! there is at this moment in the Salle des Pas-Perdus an old beggar-woman, standing about the middle of the hall. Very likely she is talking with some of those public writers. Send your office servant to fetch her; he must say to her, *Dabor ti mandana*. She will come. But don’t be unnecessarily cruel. Either accept my propositions, or say you will not make bargains with a felon (as for that, I am only a forger, remember), but do not leave Calvi in the agony of thinking this his last hour.”

“ The execution is already countermanded. I do not

wish, as you will now see, that justice should be behind you in trustfulness."

Jacques Collin looked at the attorney-general with wonder as he went to the bell and rang it.

" You have no intention of escaping? Give me your word that you have not, and I am satisfied. You shall go yourself and find that woman."

The office servant entered.

" Félix, send away the gendarmes," said Monsieur de Granville.

Jacques Collin was vanquished. In this duel with the magistrate, he meant to have been the grander, the stronger, the more generous of the two, and the magistrate had risen above him. Nevertheless, the ex-convict still felt himself superior in one respect; he was cheating the law, persuading it that the guilty was innocent, and victoriously forcing it to give up a head. On the other hand, this triumph must needs be dumb, secret, unseen, whereas the *Cicogne* rose superior to him in open day, majestically.

At the moment when Jacques Collin left Monsieur de Granville's office, the secretary-general of the Council, a deputy, the Comte des Lupeaulx, presented himself, accompanied by a feeble old man. The latter, wrapped in a wadded brown coat as if it were still winter, with white hair and a wan, cold face, walked like a gouty man leaning on a gold-headed cane. His

head was bare, he carried his hat in his hand and wore in his buttonhole a bar with seven crosses.

"What brings you, my dear des Lupeaulx?" asked the attorney-general.

"The prince sends me," answered the secretary in a whisper. "You have *carte blanche* to recover the letters of Mesdames de Sérizy and de Maufrigneuse, and those of Mademoiselle de Grandlieu. You can arrange matters with the gentleman I have brought with me."

"Who is he?" asked the attorney-general.

"I have no secrets from you, my dear count; he is the famous Corentin. His Majesty sends you word by me to report to him all the circumstances of the case and the conditions on which success may be obtained."

"Do me the favor," replied the attorney-general, still whispering, "to say to the prince that the affair is already settled, and that I do not need the services of that gentleman. I will go myself and take the orders of his Majesty as to the conclusion of the affair, which concerns the Keeper of the Seals, for two pardons will have to be granted."

"You have acted wisely in following up the matter so promptly," said des Lupeaulx, shaking hands with the attorney-general. "The king is anxious lest the peerage and these great families should be attacked and vilified on the eve of his great effort,— which you

know of. The matter is not a mere criminal trial, it is really an affair of State."

"But tell the prince that all was settled before you came to me."

"Really?"

"I think so."

"Then you 'll be the Keeper of the Seals, my dear fellow, when the present incumbent is made chancellor."

"I have no ambition," replied the attorney-general.

Des Lupeaulx went away, laughing.

"Beg the prince to ask an audience for me with the king about half-past two o'clock," said Monsieur de Granville, as he accompanied des Lupeaulx to the door.

"And you are not ambitious!" said des Lupeaulx, with a sly look at de Granville. "Well, well, you have two children, and you want to be made peer of France."

"If Monsieur le comte has those letters, my intervention is useless," remarked Corentin, when alone with Monsieur de Granville, who looked at him with a curiosity that is easily understood.

"A man like you can never be useless in so delicate an affair," replied the attorney-general, seeing that Corentin had either overheard or guessed all.

Corentin bowed with a little nod of the head that was almost patronizing.

"Do you know the person concerned?" asked the attorney-general.

"Yes, monsieur le comte; it is Jacques Collin, the head of the Society of the Ten Thousand, the banker of the galleys, an escaped convict, who for the last five years has managed to hide himself under the cassock of the Abbé Carlos Herrera. How he became actually charged with a mission from the King of Spain to the late King, I cannot tell you; we are baffled, so far, in all inquiries on this point. I am now expecting an answer from Madrid, where I have sent notes of the affair by a trusty man. The fellow holds the secrets of two kings."

"He is a man of vigorous nature. We have but two ways of dealing with him,—either to attach him to our service, or get rid of him," said the attorney-general.

"You and I have the same idea, which is a great honor for me," replied Corentin. "I am obliged to have so many ideas, for so many persons, that among the number I ought sometimes to meet with a man of sense."

This was said in so dry and icy a tone that the attorney-general kept silence, and busied himself in attending to certain other pressing matters.

X.

IN WHICH JACQUES COLLIN PREPARES FOR HIS DÉBUT
AS A COMEDIAN.

No one can imagine the amazement of Mademoiselle Jacqueline Collin when Jacques Collin appeared in the Salle des Pas-Perdus. She stood planted on her two legs, with her hands on her hips, for she was dressed as a hawker of vegetables. Accustomed as she was to wonderful exhibitions of her nephew's power, this exceeded all.

"Well, if you stand there gazing at me as if I were a museum of natural history," said Jacques Collin, taking his aunt's arm and leading her out of the Salle, "we shall be taken for two curiosities; they might arrest us, and that would be losing time."

So saying, he went down the staircase from the Galerie Marchande which leads to the rue de la Barillerie.

"Where is Paccard?" he asked.

"He is waiting for me near La Rousse's.—walking up and down the quai aux Fleurs."

"And Prudence?"

“ She is living there as my god-daughter.”

“ We ’ll go there.”

“ See if we are followed.”

La Rousse, a dealer in hardware, with a shop on the quai aux Fleurs, was at one time the widow of a noted criminal,— a member of the Ten Thousand. In 1819 Jacques Collin had faithfully paid over twenty odd thousand francs to the girl after the execution of her lover. Trompe-la-Morte alone knew of the intimacy of this young woman, then a milliner, with his *fanandel*.

“ I am the *dâb* of your man,” he said to her (this was during the period when he was living with Madame Vauquer). “ He must have spoken to you of me, my dear. Whoever betrays me dies within a year ; whoever is faithful need never fear me. I am a *friend* who will die sooner than say a word that injures those to whom I wish well. Be faithful to me as the soul is to the devil, and you shall profit by it. I promised your poor Anguste that you should be made happy. He wanted to see you well off, and he let them *faucher* him for your sake. Don’t cry. Listen to me : no one knows but me that you were the mistress of a convict, a murderer buried Saturday ; and never will I tell it. You are twenty-two years old, and pretty ; and here you are, rich, with twenty thousand francs. Forget Anguste, marry, and make yourself an honest woman if you can. In return for this tranquillity, I want you

to serve me — me and any one I send to you — without hesitating. I will never ask anything that may compromise either you or your children or your husband, if you have one. In my business I often want a safe place in which to talk with persons, or to hide ; I need a discreet woman to carry a letter, or do an errand. You shall be my letter-box, my lodge, one of my emissaries,— nothing more, and nothing less. You are too blond ; Auguste and I always called you La Rousse, and you shall keep the name. My aunt, the *marchande* in the Temple, to whom I 'll introduce you, will be the only person in the world whom you are bound to obey. Tell her everything that happens to you ; she will marry you, and you will find her very useful."

In this manner was concluded one of those diabolical compacts, like the one which bound Prudence Servien,— compacts which this man never failed to keep up, and to strengthen and cement, for, like Satan himself, he had the lust of recruiting.

Jacqueline Collin had married La Rousse in 1821 to the head-clerk of a wholesale iron-monger. This man, having bought out his patron's business, was now on the high-road to prosperity, the father of two children, and the assistant-mayor of his district. Never did La Rousse, now Madame Prélard, have the slightest ground of complaint against either Jacques Collin or

his aunt, who kept faithfully to the terms of the agreement; but, at every service asked of her, Madame Prélard trembled in all her limbs. She now became white and livid as she saw these two terrible personages enter her shop.

“We have come to talk to you on business, madame,” said Jacques Collin.

“My husband is there,” she answered.

“Well, then, I won’t take up your time; I never disturb people unnecessarily.”

“Send for a hackney-coach, my dear,” said Jacqueline Collin, “and tell my goddaughter to come down; I think I have found her a place as maid to a great lady, and the steward of the household wants to take her there.”

Paccard, who looked like a gendarme turned into a *bourgeois*, was talking at this moment with Monsieur Prélard about an important purchase of iron wire for a bridge.

A clerk fetched a coach, and a few moments later Europe, or rather Prudence Servien, Paccard, Jacques Collin, and his aunt were, to the great joy of Madame Prélard, seated in the vehicle, while Trompe-la-Mort gave the order to drive to the Barrière d’Ivry.

Prudence and Paccard, trembling before the *dabb*, resembled what we have heard of guilty souls in the last judgment.

“Where are the seven hundred and fifty thousand francs?” demanded the *dâb*, plunging upon them one of his fixed, clear looks, which so turned the blood of these lost souls, conscious of guilt, that they fancied they had more pins than hairs on their heads.

“The seven hundred *and thirty* thousand francs,” replied Jacqueline, speaking for the other two, “are in safety. I placed them this morning in La Romette’s care, in a sealed package.”

“If you had not given them to Jacqueline,” said Trompe-la-Mort, “you were going straight *there*,” pointing to the place de Grève, which the vehicle was then passing.

Prudence made a sign of the cross, as they do in her country when the lightning falls.

“I forgive you,” continued the *dâb*, “on condition that you never commit such a fault again, and that henceforth you are to me what those two fingers of my right hand are,” and he held up the first and middle fingers; “as for the thumb, that’s my good *large* here!” (striking his aunt’s shoulder). “Now listen to me. Henceforth, Paccard, you’ve nothing to fear; you may follow your nose about Paris at your ease. I permit you to marry Prudence.”

Paccard caught up Jacques Collin’s hand and kissed it.

“What shall I have to do?” he asked.

“ Nothing ; you ’ll have an income and wives, not counting your own ; for you are terribly Régence, old man ! That’s what it is to be such a handsome fellow.”

Paccard blushed on receiving this satirical eulogy from his sultan.

“ As for you, Prudence,” continued Jacques Collin, “ you need a career, a position, a future ; I shall keep you in my service. Listen to me carefully. In the rue Sainte-Barbe there’s a very good establishment belonging to that Madame de Saint-Estève whose name my aunt sometimes borrows. It is a good business, with a fine custom which brings in from fifteen to twenty thousand francs a year. La Saint-Estève puts in as manager — ”

“ La Gonore,” said Jacqueline.

“ The *large* of that poor La Pouraille,” said Paccard ; “ that’s where Europe and I hid the day poor Madame van Gobseck, our mistress — ”

“ Who gabbles when I am speaking ? ” said Jacques Collin.

Profound silence reigned in the coach. Neither Prudence nor Paccard dared even look at each other.

“ The house is kept by La Gonore,” resumed Jacques Collin. “ If you hid there with Prudence, Paccard, I see you have sense enough to *esquinter la raille* (cheat the police) ; but you could n’t faire voir des couleurs à la

darbonne (deceive her)," he continued, stroking his aunt's chin. "I see now how it was she found you! Very good. I resume; Jacqueline will negotiate with Madame de Saint-Estève for the purchase of that establishment in the rue Sainte-Barbe, and you can make a fortune there, my girl," he said to Prudence, "if you behave properly. Abbess, at your age! It is the fortune of a king's daughter!" he added in a sarcastic tone.

Prudence threw herself upon his breast and kissed him; but, with a sharp tap which showed his extraordinary strength, the *dâb* repulsed her so violently that if Paccard had not caught the girl she would have struck her head against the window of the coach and broken it.

"Paws down! I don't like such manners," said the *dâb*, harshly; "they are disrespectful to me."

"He is right, my girl," said Paccard. "Don't you see, it is just as if the *dâb* had given you a hundred thousand francs. The shop is worth that. It is on the boulevard, opposite to the Gymnase; it takes the theatre-goers when they come out."

"I shall do better than that," said Trompe-la-Mort. "I intend to buy the house—"

"My! we shall be rich by millions in six years," cried Paccard.

Weary of being interrupted, Trompe-la-Mort sent

a kick into Paccard's tibia that might have broken that of another man ; but Paccard's muscles were india rubber and his bones tin.

"Enough, *dâb* ! I'll be silent," he responded.

"Do you think I'm talking nonsense," resumed Trompe-la-Mort, who now noticed that Paccard had taken a glass or so too much. "Now attend. In the cellar of that house are two hundred and fifty thousand francs in gold." Deep silence reigned in the coach. "This gold is buried under a solid mass of stone and cement. It is necessary to get at that money, and you have only three nights to do it in. Jacqueline will help you. One hundred thousand will pay for the business and fifty thousand for the house ; you are to leave the rest."

"Where?" asked Paccard.

"In the cellar!" exclaimed Prudence.

"Hush!" said Jacqueline.

"Yes, but in order to get the business transferred *la raille* (police) must give a permit," said Paccard.

"They will," said Trompe-la-Mort, curtly. "Mind your own business."

Jacqueline looked at her nephew, and was struck with the change in that face, visible through even the impassible mask beneath which the strong man habitually concealed his emotions.

"My dear," said Jacques Collin to Prudence Servien,

"my aunt will give you the seven hundred and fifty thousand francs — "

"Seven hundred and *thirty*," said Paccard.

"Well, so be it, — seven hundred and thirty!" resumed Jacques Collin. "To-night you must get back in some way or other into Madame Lucien's house. Go up through the skylight to the roof, down the chimney to your late mistress's bedroom, and put the packet containing the money in the mattress of her bed — "

"Why not go in by the door of the apartment?" asked Prudence.

"Idiot! the seals are on it," replied Jacques Collin. "The inventory will be taken in a few days, and it will then appear that you are innocent of the robbery."

"*Vive le dâb!*" cried Paccard. "What kindness!"

"Driver, stop!" called out Jacques Collin in his powerful voice.

The coach drew up near the stand of hackney-coaches by the Jardin des Plantes.

"Off with you, my children," said Jacques Collin to Prudence and Paccard, "and don't commit any follies. Be to-night on the Pont des Arts about five o'clock. My aunt will be there and tell you if there is any counter order. One must foresee everything," he whispered to his aunt. "Jacqueline will explain to you to-morrow," he added, "how you can go to work to get the

gold out of the *profonde* without danger. It is a delicate operation."

Prudence and Paccard sprang out upon the pavement as happy as pardoned thieves.

" Ah, what a man he is, our *dâb*!" cried Paccard.

" He'd be the king of men if he did n't despise women so."

" Ha ! is n't he amiable?" exclaimed Paccard. " Did you see the kick he gave me? We deserved to be sent *ad patres*; for it was our filching that money that got him into all these troubles."

" Let's hope," said the keener and wiser Prudence, " that he is n't getting us into some crime in hopes of sending us to the *pré*."

" He! if he meant that he'd say so. You don't know him. What a fine career he has made for you! Why, here we are, regular *bourgeois*! What luck! Oh, when he likes you, that man, he has n't his equal for goodness!"

" Minette," said Jacques Collin to his aunt, " take charge yourself of La Gonore; you must keep her quiet. In five days from now she will be arrested, and they will find in her room a hundred and fifty thousand francs in gold which remain from another share in the murder of the Crottats — "

" But that will give her five years in the Madelonnettes," said Jacqueline.

"About that," replied Jacques Collin. "And it is a good reason why the Saint-Estève should sell her house. She can't manage it herself, and she won't find the right kind of deputy when she wants her. Consequently, you can easily arrange the matter. We want an *eye* there. But all these operations are secondary to the negotiation I am now engaged in about the letters. Unrip your gown, and give me those specimens of our merchandise. Where are the three packets?"

"*Parbleu!* La Rousse has them."

"Driver," cried Jacques Collin, "turn round, and go to the Palais de Justice, and make haste! — I promised celerity, and I've been gone over half an hour; it is too much. Stay with La Rousse yourself, and give the three packets, sealed up, to an office-servant who will come there and ask for Madame de Saint-Estève. The *de* is the password; he'll say to you, 'Madame, I have come from the attorney-general for the things you know of.' Stand outside the house, and be looking at what goes on in the flower-market, so as not to excite Prélard's attention. As soon as you have given up the letters, go to work with Prudence and Paccard."

"I see what you are after," said Jacqueline; "you want to take Bibi-Lupin's place. Lucien's death has turned your brain."

"And Théodore, whose hair they meant to cut at four o'clock this afternoon."

" Well, after all, it is an idea ! We should end our days as honest folk and *bourgeois* on some nice property,— in the fine climate of Touraine, say."

" What else could I be ? Lucien has taken away my soul, my happy life ; I see thirty years still before me, and I have no heart to live them. Instead of being the *dab* of the galleys, I shall be the Figaro of the law, and I 'll avenge Lucien. I can only demolish Corentin in the skin of the police. It might be life still to have a man to pursue. All that we do and are in life is but appearance. Reality is Idea !" he added, striking his forehead. " How much have you got in the treasury ? "

" Nothing," replied his aunt, alarmed by the tone and manner of her nephew. " I gave you all for your young one. La Romette has n't more than twenty thousand for her business. I have taken all Madame Nourisson had, which was sixty thousand francs of her own. Ha ! our sheets have n't been washed for a year. The young one cost you all our money and the *fade* of the *Fanandels*, and all that Nourisson possessed into the bargain."

" That makes — "

" Five hundred and fifty thousand."

" Well, of that we have a hundred and fifty thousand in gold which Paccard and Prudence will owe us. I can tell you where to get another two hundred thousand ;

the rest will come from Esther's estate. We must reimburse the Nourrisson. With Théodore, Paccard, Prudence, the Nourrisson, and you, I'll soon have the battalion that I need. Now listen — ”

“ Here are the three letters,” said Jacqueline, who by this time had given a last snip to the lining of her gown.

“ Very good ! ” replied Jacques Collin, receiving the precious autographs on vellum paper which still held its perfume. “ Théodore did the trick at Nanterre.”

“ Did he ? How ? ”

“ Never mind how ; time is precious. He wanted to give a worm to a little bird,—a Corsican named Ginetta. You must get la Nourrisson to find her. I'll send you the necessary information in a letter Gault will hand to you. Come to the *guichet* of the Conciergerie in two hours from now. You must foist that girl upon Godet's sister,—a clear-starcher ; she must lodge there. Godet and Ruffard were La Pouraille's accomplices in the robbery and murder of the Crottats. The four hundred and fifty thousand francs are still intact : one third in La Gonore's cellar ; the second third in La Gonore's chamber (that belongs to Ruffard) ; the third is Godet's, and it is hidden somewhere in his sister's house. We will begin by taking one hundred and fifty thousand from La Pouraille's cache, one hundred from Godet's, one hundred from Ruffard's. Once Ruf-

fard and Godet are locked up, it is *they* who have made away with part of the money. Prudence and Paccard will do the trick at La Gonore's, and you and Ginetta (who seems to me a sly cat) must manœuvre Godet's sister. For my début in comedy, I intend to make the *Cicogne* recover the four hundred thousand francs stolen from the Crottats and find the guilty parties. I shall seem to clear up the affair at Nanterre. We shall recover our funds, and be at the very heart of the police. We were the game, now we'll be the hunters, that's all. Give the driver three francs."

The coach stopped before the Palais. Jacqueline, bewildered, paid the man. Trompe-la-Mort went up the staircase on his way back to the office of the attorney-general.

XI.

MESSIEURS LES ANGLAIS, FIRE FIRST!

A TOTAL change of life is so violent a crisis that, in spite of his decision to make it, Jacques Collin walked slowly up the steps of the staircase which leads to the Galerie Marchande, where, beneath the peristyle of the court of assizes, is the gloomy entrance to the law offices. A political matter had occasioned a sort of gathering at the foot of the double staircase which leads to the court of assizes, so that the ex-convict, absorbed in his own thoughts, was stopped for a few moments by the throng. To left of this double staircase stands out, like an immense pilaster, one of the buttresses of the Palais, and close beside it is a small door. This small door gives entrance to a corkscrew staircase, which serves as a way of communication with the Conciergerie. By it the attorney-general, the director of the prison, the judges of the court of assizes, and the chief of the detective police can come and go. It was by a branch of this staircase, now disused, that Marie-Antoinette, queen of France, was taken before

the Revolutionary tribunal which sat, as we know, in the great and solemn hall of the court of appeals.

The heart shrinks at the sight of this dreadful stairway when we think that the daughter of Maria Theresa, whose head-dress and hoop once filled the grand staircase at Versailles, passed this way. Was she expiating the crime of her mother,—the odious partitioning of Poland? Sovereigns who commit such crimes do not think of the retribution demanded by Providence.

At the moment when Jacques Collin was about to enter the vaulted passage-way beneath the staircase, Bibi-Lupin came out by the little door in the buttressed wall. The chief of the detective police was coming from the Conciergerie, and was also on his way to the attorney-general's office. We can imagine the amazement of Bibi-Lupin when he saw before him the well-known overcoat of Carlos Herrera, which he had watched and studied for some hours that morning. He ran to head him off. Hearing steps, Jacques Collin turned round. The two enemies stood face to face. Each stood still, and the same look darted from each pair of eyes, different as they were, like two pistol-shots in a duel fired at the same instant.

“ Ha ! this time I have you, brigand ! ” cried the chief of police.

“ Ha ! ha ! ” replied Jacques Collin, ironically. The thought crossed his mind that Monsieur de Granville

had ordered him to be followed ; and, strange fact ! it gave him pain to think that man less great than he imagined him.

Bibi-Lupin sprang courageously at Jacques Collin's throat ; but the latter, with his eye on his adversary, received him with a sharp blow which sent the man six feet off with his heels in the air. Trompe-la-Morte went composedly up to Bibi-Lupin and offered him a hand to rise, — precisely like an English boxer, who, sure of his strength, is ready for the next round.. Bibi-Lupin was much too strong a man to make an outcry ; but he sprang up, ran to the entrance of the corridor, and signed to a gendarme to stand there on guard. Then, with the rapidity of lightning, he returned to his enemy, who was watching his proceedings tranquilly. Jacques Collin had made up his mind : either the attorney-general had broken his word to him, or he had not taken Bibi-Lupin into his confidence ; in which case it was necessary to explain his position.

" Do you mean to arrest me ? " he asked of his enemy. " Say so without more ado. Don't I know that in the heart of the Palais you are stronger than I ? I could kill you where you stand, but I could n't massacre all the gendarmes of the line. Let's have no noise about it ; where do you want to take me ? "

" To Monsieur Camusot."

" Very good ; to Monsieur Camusot," responded

Jacques Collin. "But why not to the attorney-general?— it is nearer," he added.

Bibi-Lupin, who knew himself out of favor in the higher regions of judicial power, being suspected of making his fortune out of criminals and their victims, was not unwilling to appear before the attorney-general with so fine a capture.

"We will go there," he said, "that suits me. But, since you surrender, you must let me trim you; I'm afraid of your claws."

So saying he drew a pair of handcuffs from his pocket. Jacques Collin held out his hands, and Bibi-Lupin fitted them on.

"*Ah ça!*" said the latter, "since you are so good-humored, just tell me how you got out of the Conciergerie."

"By the same way you did,— the little staircase."

"Then you must have played some trick on the gendarmes?"

"No; Monsieur de Granville set me at liberty on parole."

"*Planches-tu?* (are you joking?)"

"You'll see if I am. Maybe the handcuffs will go on you next."

At this instant Corentin, whom we left in the attorney-general's office, was saying to that magistrate:

"Well, monsieur, it is an hour since our man de-

parted ; are not you afraid he has given you the slip ? He may be already on the road to Spain, and we shall never recover him or the letters, for Spain is a very visionary land."

" Either I don't know men, or he will return," replied Monsieur de Granville. " All his own interests oblige him to return ; he has more to gain from me than I from him."

At this moment Bibi-Lupin appeared.

" Monsieur le comte," he said, " I have some good news to give you. Jacques Collin, who had escaped, is retaken."

" See ! " cried Jacques Collin, " how you have kept your word. Ask your double-faced agent where he found me."

" Where ? " asked the attorney-general.

" Not two steps from the *parquet*," replied Bibi-Lupin.

" Relieve that man of your irons," said Monsieur de Granville, sternly. " Remember that until you get further orders this man is to be left at liberty. Go out ! you are too much in the habit of talking and acting as if you alone were the police, and the law too."

So saying, the attorney-general turned his back on the chief of the detective police, who became livid, especially after receiving a glance from Jacques Collin which seemed to him to foretell his downfall.

"I have not left my office; I was waiting for you; you cannot doubt that I have kept my word, as you have kept yours," said Monsieur de Granville to Jacques Collin.

"At the first moment I doubted you, Monsieur le comte; perhaps in my place you would have thought as I did; but reflection showed me that I was unjust. I bring you more than you can give me; you had no interest in betraying me."

The attorney-general exchanged a rapid glance with Corentin. That glance could not escape Trompe-la-Mort, whose attention was concentrated on Monsieur de Granville; he turned and saw a little old man, ensconced in an arm-chair in a corner of the room. Instantly, warned by that keen and rapid instinct which tells of the presence of an enemy, Jacques Collin examined this personage; he saw at a glance that the eyes were not of the same age as the rest of the person and the style of the clothes, and he was sure of a disguise.

"We are not alone!" he said.

"No," replied the attorney-general, briefly.

"Monsieur is, I think," said the ex-convict, "one of my best acquaintances."

He took a step toward the old man, and recognized Corentin, the real and avowed author of Lucien's downfall. Jacques Collin, whose face was a brick-red, be-

came, for an almost imperceptible moment, pale and nearly white; all his blood rushed to his heart, so hot and frenzied was his desire to spring upon that dangerous beast and crush him. But he drove back the brutal desire, and restrained it by the force which made him so terrible. He assumed a friendly air and a tone of obsequious politeness,—the habit of which he had acquired while playing the rôle of an ecclesiastic of the higher order. He bowed to the little old man.

“Monsieur Corentin,” he said, “is it to accident that I owe the pleasure of meeting you, or am I fortunate enough to be the object of your visit to the Parquet?”

The amazement of the attorney-general was great; he set himself to examine the two men now brought face to face with each other. Jacques Collin’s movements and words denoted a crisis, and he was curious to understand the meaning of it. On this sudden and miraculous recognition of his personality, Corentin started up like a snake whose tail has been trodden on.

“Yes, it is I, my dear Abbé Carlos Herrera.”

“Have you come,” asked Trompe-la-Mort, “to place yourself between the attorney-general and me? Am I to have the happiness of being made the subject of a negotiation which may show off your brilliant talents? Here, monsieur,” said the convict, turning back to the attorney-general, “I won’t make you lose time so pre-

cious as yours ; here are the samples of my merchandise." So saying, he held out to Monsieur de Granville three letters which he took from the pocket of his over-coat. " While you are looking over them I will, with your permission, converse with monsieur here."

" That is too much honor for me, monsieur," said Corentin, who could not repress a slight quiver.

" You obtained a complete success in our late affair, monsieur," said Jacques Collin. " I was beaten," he added carelessly, like a gambler who loses his money, " but you left a few men on the field ; the victory cost you something."

" Yes," replied Corentin, accepting the jest ; " if you lost your queen, I lost both my castles."

" Oh ! Contenson was only a pawn," said Jacques Collin, " easily replaced. You are,— permit me to give you this praise to your face,— you are, upon my honor, a marvellous man."

" No, no, I bow before your superiority," replied Corentin, with the look of a stage-jester, and as if he had said, " You want to *blaguer*, very good, *blaguons !*" " For I, you know, dispose of power, and you,— you are, so to speak, alone — "

" Oh, oh ! " exclaimed Jacques Collin, significantly.

" And you almost carried the day," continued Corentin, taking note of the exclamation. " You are the most extraordinary man I have ever met, and I have

known many that were very extraordinary ; for the classes with whom I fight are all remarkable for their audacity and their bold conceptions. I was, unfortunately, very intimate with the late Duc d'Ortrante. I have worked with Louis XVIII. while he reigned and when he was an exile ; also for the Directory and for the Emperor. You are of the stamp of Louvel, the finest political instrument I have ever seen ; but you have also the suppleness of diplomats. And what auxiliaries you have ! I'd give a good many heads to the block if I had the cook of that poor little Esther in my service. I can't find such people myself ; where do you get them ? ”

“ Monsieur,” replied Jacques Collin, “ you overwhelm me. From you, such praises would turn the head of any man.”

“ They are deserved. Why ! if you had n’t had that little fool of a poet on your hands to defend, you’d have routed us all.”

“ Ah ! monsieur, but I work underhand. To be great and strong in the broad daylight, and at all hours, it takes you and yours.”

“ Well, come,” said Corentin, “ we are each convinced of our mutual merit and value. Here we are now, both alone. I have lost my old friends, and you your young *protégé*. I am the stronger for the moment. Why should n’t we do as the people in the ‘Auberge

des Adrets'? I hold out my hand to you and say: 'Shake hands, and let's make an end of it.' I offer you, in presence of the attorney-general, a full and complete pardon; you shall be one of mine, next to myself and, possibly, my successor."

"So it is a position that you are offering me?" said Jacques Collin. "A fine position! I should pass from black to white."

"You would be in a sphere where your talents would be appreciated and rewarded, and in which you could act freely at your ease. The political and governmental police has its perils. I have already, such as you see me, been twice imprisoned,—I'm none the worse for that. But one travels, one sees the world; we are all that we desire to be; the machinery of great political dramas; treated politely by the great seigneurs. Come, my dear Jacques Collin, will that suit you?"

"Have you orders in respect to this?" asked the convict.

"I have full power," replied Corentin, rejoicing at his inspiration.

"You are joking; you are a very strong man and you must admit that others may distrust you. You have sold more than one man by tying him in a sack into which you persuaded him to enter. I know your fine battles,—the Montauran affair, the Simeuse affair. Ha! ha! those were the Marengos of spydom."

"Well," said Corentin, "you have confidence in the attorney-general, have n't you?"

"Yes," said Jacques Collin, bowing respectfully. "I admire his noble character, his firmness, his loyalty, and I would give my life to see him happy. Therefore," he added, addressing the count, "I shall begin by curing the dangerous condition in which Madame de Sérizy now lies."

The attorney-general made a motion of surprise and pleasure.

"Well, then, ask him," continued Corentin, "whether I have not full power to take you from the shameful position you now hold and attach you to my person."

"That is true," said Monsieur de Granville, watching the convict closely.

"Absolutely true? I am to have absolution for the past and the promise of succeeding you if I show my competency?"

"Between two men like you and me, there can be no misunderstanding," replied Corentin, with a grandeur by which most persons would have been caught.

"And the price of this transaction is, no doubt, the return of three bundles of letters?" said Jacques Collin.

"I did not think it necessary to say that."

"My dear Monsieur Corentin," said Trompe-la-Mort, with an irony worthy of that which made Talma's tri-

umph in the rôle of Nicomède. “I thank you; I owe to you the knowledge of what I am, and the importance attached to depriving me of those weapons. I shall not forget it. I shall be ever, and always, at your service; and instead of saying, like Robert Macaire, ‘Let us embrace!’ I shall embrace you.”

He seized Corentin by the middle of the body with such rapidity that the latter could not defend himself; he pressed him like a doll to his heart, kissed him on both cheeks, lifted him like a feather, opened the door of the office and deposited him outside, somewhat bruised by the rough embrace.

“Adieu, my dear fellow,” he whispered in his ear. “We are separated, one from the other, by the length of three dead bodies; we have measured swords, and both are of the same steel and the same dimensions. Let us respect each other; but I choose to be your equal, not your subordinate. Armed as you would be, I think you too dangerous a general for your lieutenant. A grave lies between us. Sorrow to you if you attempt to come upon my ground! You call yourself the State just as lacqueys take the names of their masters; I shall call myself Justice. We shall often meet; let us treat each other with all the more dignity and propriety because we are, and ever shall be — atrocious scoundrels,” he whispered. “I set you an example in that embrace.”

For the first time in his life, Corentin looked foolish, and he allowed his terrible adversary to shake him by the hand.

"If this is how it will be," he said, "I think it is to the interests of both to remain *friends*."

"We shall be the stronger on both sides, — but also more dangerous," added Jacques Collin in a low voice. "You will permit me to ask you to-morrow for certain instalments on this bargain."

"Ah!" said Corentin, good-humoredly, "I see you take your affair out of my hands and give it to the attorney-general. You will be the cause of his promotion. I cannot help telling you that you do right. Bibi-Lupin's ways are well-known; besides, he has served his time. If you take his place, you will live in the only condition that really suits you. I shall be charmed to see you in it,—on my word of honor."

"Au revoir, and soon," replied Jacques Collin.

XII.

JACQUES COLLIN ABDICATES THE ROYALTY OF DÂB.

ON re-entering the office, Trompe-la-Mort found the attorney-general sitting at his desk with his head in his hands.

"How can you prevent Madame de Sérizy from becoming insane?" asked Monsieur de Granville, looking up.

"I can do it in five minutes," replied Jacques Collin.

"And you are willing to place all the letters of those ladies in my hands?"

"Have you read the three I gave you?"

"Yes," replied the attorney-general.

"Well, we are alone; forbid all entrance and let us come to an agreement," said Jacques Collin.

"One moment. Before all else the law must take its course; Monsieur Camusot has orders to arrest your aunt."

"He cannot find her."

"The police are to search a place in the Temple where a Mademoiselle Paccard keeps an establishment."

"They will find nothing but rags, costumes, dia-

monds and uniforms. Still, it is high time to put an end to Monsieur Camusot's zeal."

Monsieur de Granville rang the bell and told the servant to deny him to all comers.

"Now," he said to Jacques Collin, "let us finish what we were saying. I wish to know your prescription for curing the countess."

"Monsieur le comte," said Jacques Collin, becoming grave. "I was, as you know, condemned to five years at the galleys for the crime of forgery. I love my liberty. That love, like all loves, defeated itself,—for lovers quarrel because they are too adoring. By escaping, and then being retaken, I have, in point of fact, done seven years at the galleys. You have therefore only to pardon me the increase of penalty which I incurred at the *pré*,—excuse me, I mean the galleys. In reality, I have suffered my punishment, and until they find me guilty of some other crime,—which I defy the law, and even Corentin, to do,—I ought to be restored to my rights as a French citizen. Excluded from Paris and under the supervision of the police, is that a life, I ask you? Where can I go? What can I do? You know my capacities. You saw Corentin, that arsenal of tricks and treachery, livid with fear before me and doing justice to my talents. That man has robbed me of everything! for it is he, he only, by what means and in whose interests I do not know,

who has overthrown the edifice of Lucien's fortune. Corentin and Camusot have done it all.

"Do not recriminate," said Monsieur de Granville ; "keep to your point."

"Well, my point is this : Last night, holding in my hand the icy hand of that dead child, I vowed to myself to renounce the senseless struggle I have carried on for twenty years against society. You will not think me capable of cant after what I have told you of my religious opinions. Well, I have seen the world for twenty years on its seamy side, in its caves and cellars, and I recognize that there is in the march of events a force, which you call Providence, which I call fate, and my comrades call luck. All evil action is overtaken by vengeance of some kind, no matter with what rapidity it gets away from it. In this business of fighting the world, see what happens ! You hold good cards, quint and quatorze in hand with the lead ; a candle falls, the cards are burned, or the player falls in a fit ! There you have Lucien's history. That lad, that angel, never committed so much as the shadow of a crime ; he let himself be led, he let things be done for him. He was about to marry Mademoiselle de Grandlieu, to be made a marquis ; he had a fortune. Well, a girl poisons herself, she hides a sum of money, and the edifice of that fine fate, so laboriously raised, crumbles in a moment. And who is the man who gave the first

thrust? A man covered with hidden infamy; a monster who has committed in the world of moneyed interests such crimes that every penny of his fortune is soaked with the tears of a family; a Nucingen, who has been a legalized Jacques Collin in the world of money. You know as well as I do the liquidations, the tricks of that man for which he deserves hanging; but society accepts him. My chains will forever hamper all my actions, even the most virtuous. To be a shuttlecock between two battledores, one called the galleys the other the police, is a life whose triumph is toil without end and in which tranquillity seems to me impossible. Jacques Collin, monsieur, is being buried at this moment with Lucien, whom they are now sprinkling with holy-water before he goes to Père-Lachaise. But I, where can I go, not to live, but to die! In the present state of things, you, I mean Law and Justice, have not been willing to concern yourself with the civil and social condition of the liberated convict. When the law is satisfied, society is not; it continues its distrust, and it does all to justify that distrust to itself. It makes the liberated convict an impossible being. It ought to return to him all his rights, for he has paid the penalty of his crime; but society forbids him to live within a certain zone. It says to the wretched man: ‘Paris and its suburbs to such a distance, the only place where you can hide

your past, you shall not inhabit.' Moreover, it subjects the liberated convict to police supervision, and you think it possible for a man to live under such conditions? To live, one must work; for we don't bring fortunes from the galleys. But you have arranged that the convict shall be clearly pointed out, recognized, stamped, and penned, because you think citizens may trust him when society and justice will not. You condemn him to hunger or to crime. He can get no work; he is inevitably driven to return to his former business, which will send him to the scaffold. Thus, while desiring to renounce my struggle against the law, I saw no place under the sun above us for me. One only could I fill,—that of being a servant of the Authority which weighs so heavily upon us. When this thought came to me the power in my possession of which I have spoken to you, made itself clear to my mind. Three great families are in the hollow of my hand. Do not think that I desire to blackmail them. Blackmailing is the most cowardly of murders. To my eyes it is a crime of deeper wickedness than murder; a murderer must have a devilish courage. I act out my opinions; for the letters which are my security, which enable me to speak as I do to you, which put me, at this moment, on an equal footing with you,—I, Crime, you, Justice,—are at your disposition. Let your servant now go and ask for them in your name;

he will receive them. I seek no equivalent, I do not sell them. Alas ! Monsieur le comte, when I put them aside to keep them I did not think of myself; I thought of some peril which Lucien might possibly encounter. If you will not comply with my request I have more courage, more disgust of life than I need to blow my brains out and rid you of me. I could, with a passport, go to America and live in the wilds ; I have all the makings of a savage in me. Such are the thoughts that filled my mind last night. Your secretary must have given you, I think, a message I charged him to convey to you. Seeing the precautions you were taking to save Lucien's memory from infamy, I gave you all my life, poor gift ! I no longer cared for it ; it seemed to me impossible without the light that lighted it, without the joy that brightened it, without the thought that was its meaning, without the splendor of that young poet who was its sun, and I wished then to give you these letters — ”

Monsieur de Granville bowed his head.

“ When I was taken to the *préau*, I heard that my little chain-companion was about to be executed for the crime at Nanterre,” continued Jacques Collin. “ I learned also that Bibi-Lupin is betraying his position ; one of his own agents was engaged in the Crottat murder. Was not this, as you would say, providential ? I then saw the possibility of usefulness, of employing the

faculties with which I am gifted, the melancholy knowledge that I have acquired, in the interests of society, — of being useful, in short, instead of harmful; and I have dared to count upon your comprehension and your kindness."

The air of good-will, of candor, of simplicity in the man who thus confessed himself without bitterness, without that philosophy of vice which had hitherto made him so terrible to listen to, would have caused all those who saw it to believe in a transformation. He was no longer his past self.

"I believe in you so thoroughly," he resumed with the humility of a penitent, "that I desire to put myself wholly at your disposal. You see me between three roads, — suicide, America, and the rue de Jérusalem. Bibi-Lupin is rich; he has served his time; he is a double-faced sentry of the law; and if you will let me act against him, *je le paumerais marron* (I will take him red-handed) within a week. If you will give me the place of that scoundrel, you will render a great service to society. I shall be faithful. I have all the qualities needed for the work. I have more than Bibi-Lupin, because I am educated, I have followed my classes in rhetoric; and I am not such a blockhead as he, for I have manners, — when I choose to have them. I have no other ambition than to be an element of order and repression instead of being corruption itself.

I will never again recruit a human being for the grand army of vice. Monsieur, when you capture the enemy's general on the open field you don't shoot him, you give him back his sword, with a town for a prison. Well, I am the general of the galleys, and I surrender. It is not the Law that has struck me down, it is a death.—The sphere in which I ask to act and live is the only one that I can live in. In it, I shall develop the power that I feel within me. Decide."

He ceased speaking, and stood in a submissive and respectful attitude.

" You have put those letters at my disposal?" said the attorney-general.

" You can send for them ; they will be given to the person whom you send."

" Where?"

Jacques Collin read the heart of the attorney-general, and he continued on the same lines :—

" You have promised me the commutation of Calvi's death sentence to one of twenty years at the galleys. Oh ! I am not reminding you of that as a bargain," he said quickly, answering a gesture of the attorney-general ; " but that life ought to be saved for other reasons ; the young man is innocent."

" How can I obtain the letters?" asked the attorney-general. " It is my duty to know if you are the man you say you are. I want you without conditions — "

“Send a confidential man to the quai aux Fleurs; he will see on the steps of a hardware shop, at the sign of the ‘Bouclier d’Achille’ — ”

“The house of the ‘Bouclier’?”

“Yes,” said Jacques Collin, with a bitter smile, “my shield and buckler are there. Your man will find an old woman on those steps, dressed, as I told you before, like a marketwoman of some means, with pendants in her ears. He must ask for Madame de Saint-Estève,—be careful not to forget the *de*,—and he must say to her: ‘I come from the attorney-general for the things you know of.’ You will at once receive three sealed packets.”

“Are all the letters there?” asked Monsieur de Granville.

“Well, well, you are strong! You haven’t stolen your office,” said Jacques Collin, smiling. “I see you think me capable of tricking you with blank paper. You don’t know me!” he added, “but I trust you as a son his father.”

“You will now be taken back to the Conciergerie,” said the attorney-general, “and there you will await the decision on your fate.” He rang the bell and said to the servant who answered it, “Request Monsieur Garnery to come here, if he is in his office.”

Besides the forty-eight commissaries of police, who watch over Paris like forty-eight petty providences,

(hence the name *Quart-d'œil*, quarter of an eye, given by thieves' argot, because there are four to each arrondissement), and not counting the detective police, there are two commissaries attached to the police proper, and two to the courts for the execution of delicate missions and occasionally to do the work of the examining-judges. These places require men of middle age, proved capacity, great morality, and absolute discretion. It is one of the miracles performed by Providence for the benefit of Paris that natures of this kind can always be obtained. No description of the Palais would be complete without mention of this *preventive magistracy*, if we may so call it, which is in truth the most powerful auxiliary of the law; for if law has, by the force of things, lost something of its ancient pomp and grandeur, we must admit that it has gained materially. In Paris, above all, its mechanism has been brought to perfection.

Monsieur de Granville having sent his secretary, Monsieur de Chargebœuf, to Lucien's funeral, he wished to substitute a safe man to send upon this new errand, and Monsieur Garnery was one of the two commissaries delegated to the legal service.

"Monsieur le comte," said Jacques Collin, "I have proved to you that I have my point of honor. You gave me liberty to go and I returned. It is now eleven o'clock; the mortuary mass for Lucien must be nearly

over, and they will take him to the cemetery. Instead of sending me to the Conciergerie, permit me to accompany the body of that child to Père-Lachaise. I will return and give myself up a prisoner."

" You may go," said Monsieur de Granville, in a voice full of kindness.

" One word more. The money of that girl, Esther Gobseck, was not stolen. During the half-hour's freedom you gave me this morning, I questioned her servants. I am as sure of them as you are of your agents. You will undoubtedly find the money said to be stolen in Mademoiselle Esther's room, when the seals are removed. Her maid tells me that she was very secretive and distrustful, and I make no doubt that the bank-bills are hidden in her bed. Let it be well examined, open the mattress and pillows, and you will find the money."

" Are you sure of that?"

" I am sure of the relative honesty of my scamps; they never venture to cheat me. I have the power of life and death over them. I judge and condemn and execute without all your formalities. You shall soon see the effects of my power. I will recover for you the sums stolen from the Crottats; I will *serre marron* (catch red-handed) one of Bibi-Lupin's agents, his right arm; and I will give you the secret of the crime committed at Nanterre. Isn't all that a pledge? Now, if you will put me in the service of the

law and the police, at the end of a year you will be glad of your resolution. I will be honestly what I ought to be; and I shall know how to succeed in all the affairs confided to me."

"I cannot promise you anything but my own good-will in the matter. What you ask does not depend on me alone. To the king, on receiving the report of the Keeper of the Seals, belongs the sole right to pardon, and the place you ask for is in the gift of the prefect of police."

"Monsieur Garnery," announced the office servant.

On a sign from the attorney-general, the commissary entered, gave Jacques Collin the glance of a connoisseur, and could hardly repress his surprise when Monsieur de Granville said to the ex-convict:—

"You may go."

"Will you permit me," said Jacques Collin, "to wait here till Monsieur Garnery brings you that which is my strength? I should be glad to carry away with me a proof of your satisfaction."

This humility and good faith touched the attorney-general. "Go," he said; "I am sure of you."

Jacques Collin bowed with the submission of an inferior to his superior. Ten minutes later Monsieur de Granville had in his possession the three packages of letters, each sealed up and intact. But the importance of the affair and the sort of confession made to him

by Jacques Collin had, as he now recollects, caused him to forget the latter's promise of curing Madame de Sérizy.

Once outside those walls, Jacques Collin became conscious of an incredible sense of well-being. He felt himself free and born to a new life. He walked rapidly from the Palais to the church of Saint-Germain des Prés, where the mass was over. They were sprinkling the coffin with holy-water, and he arrived in time to share in that Christian farewell to the remains of the child he cherished so tenderly. Then he got into one of the coaches and followed the body to the cemetery.

At funeral ceremonies in Paris, unless under extraordinary circumstances, like the death of some celebrated man, the crowd which attends in the church does not follow to the cemetery. People have time for the church service ; but their own affairs are pressing, and they return to them as soon as possible. So, out of ten mourning-coaches on this occasion, only four were occupied. When the procession reached Père-Lachaise, not more than a dozen persons surrounded the grave, among whom was Rastignac.

" You are faithful to him," said Jacques Collin to his former acquaintance.

Rastignac gave a start of surprise on seeing Vautrin beside him.

" Be calm," said Madame Vauquer's former boarder,

"you have a slave in me, if only because I find you here. My support is not to be despised; I am, or shall be, more powerful than ever. You've slipped your cable, you have been clever, but you may, some time or other, want me, and I will always serve you."

"What are you going to be?"

"The purveyor of the galleys, instead of their lodger," replied Jacques Collin.

Rastignac made a motion of disgust.

"Suppose you are robbed?"

Rastignac walked on quickly to get away from Jacques Collin.

"You don't know under what circumstances you may find yourself," said the ex-convict.

They had now reached the grave dug for Lucien beside that of Esther.

"Two beings who loved each other and were happy," said Jacques Collin. "They are reunited. It is a happiness even to rot together. I will lie there, too."

When Lucien's body was lowered into the grave Jacques Collin fell rigid and unconscious. That strong being could not bear the slight rattle of the earth which the grave-diggers threw upon the coffin in order to demand their fees.

At that moment two members of the detective police force came up, and recognizing the ex-abbé, they lifted him into a coach and took him away with them.

"What is it now?" asked Jacques Collin, when he recovered consciousness. He looked about the coach and recognized the police agents, one of whom was Ruffard.

"Merely that the attorney-general is asking for you," replied Ruffard. "We looked everywhere, and only found you in the cemetery, where you came near pitching head-foremost into the grave of that young man."

Jacques Collin was silent.

"Did Bibi-Lupin send you for me?" he asked presently of the other police-agent.

"No, it was Monsieur Garnery."

"Did he say anything to you?"

The two agents consulted each other with expressive pantomime.

"Come, tell me, how did he give the order?"

"He told us to find you immediately," replied Ruffard, "saying that you were either in the church of Saint-Germain des Prés, or at the cemetery."

"The attorney-general had asked for me?"

"Perhaps so."

"Yes, that's it," said Jacques Collin, "he wants me;" and he fell back into a silence that much disquieted the two agents.

About half-past two o'clock, Jacques Collin re-entered the attorney-general's office, and there saw a new

personage, Comte Octave de Bauvan, one of the judges of the court of appeals.

" You forgot that you promised to relieve Madame de Sérizy's mind from its present danger," said the attorney-general, when he saw him.

" Ask those two men, Monsieur le comte, where they found me," said Jacques Collin, signing to the police-agents to enter the office.

" Lying unconscious, Monsieur le comte, beside the grave of the young man they were burying."

" That will do," said the attorney-general, motioning to the men to leave the office.

" Relieve Madame de Sérizy's mind," said Monsieur de Bauvan to Jacques Collin, " and you shall have what you ask."

" I ask nothing," replied Jacques Collin. " I surrendered at discretion, and Monsieur le comte must have received — "

" All the letters ! " said Monsieur de Granville, " but you said that you could relieve Madame de Sérizy's mind and save her reason. Can you? or was that mere bravado ? "

" I hope I can," replied Jacques Collin, modestly.

" Then come with me to her house," said Comte Octave.

" No, monsieur," said Jacques. " I am still a convict, and I will not enter a carriage with you. If I de-

sire to serve the police and the law I shall not begin by insulting it. Go yourself to Madame la comtesse ; I shall be there soon after you. Say to her that Lucien's best friend, the Abbé Carlos Herrera will call to see her. The expectation of that visit will necessarily make an impression upon her, and be favorable to the result. You will excuse me for once more playing the part of the Spanish priest ; it is for the purpose of doing you a great service."

"I will meet you there at four o'clock," said Monsieur de Granville. "I must now go to the king with the Keeper of the Seals."

Jacques Collin took a coach and drove to the quai Malaquais. There he went up to the little room on the fourth floor where he himself had lodged, which was separate from Lucien's apartment. The porter, much astonished at seeing him again, wanted to talk about the many events which had happened.

"I know all," said the abbe. "I was compromised, notwithstanding the sanctity of my character. But, thanks to the intervention of the Spanish ambassador, I am now at liberty."

He went hurriedly to his room, where he took from the cover of a breviary a certain letter which Lucien had written to Madame de Sérizy when the latter had dismissed him in disgrace after seeing him at the Opera-house with Esther.

In his anxiety and despair at the position in which he was beginning to find himself, Lucien had not sent the letter, believing it to be useless, but Jacques Collin had read that poetical masterpiece, and as whatever Lucien wrote was sacred to him, he had slipped the letter under cover of his breviary. When Monsieur de Granville spoke to him of Madame de Sérizy's state, his profound mind rightly believed that the despair and madness of the countess came from remorse for the quarrel she had allowed to go on between Lucien and herself. He knew women as magistrates know criminals ; he could guess, like them, the hidden springs of the heart, and he thought at once that Madame de Sérizy probably believed that Lucien's death was caused by her unkindness, and was bitterly remorseful for it. The proof given by Lucien's poetic letter that in spite of her rigor he still relied upon her and loved her, would probably restore her reason.

The entrance of this dangerous personage to the hotel de Sérizy was a shock as well as a hope to the Comte de Sérizy and to his friend Comte Octave de Bauvan, who alone were present, all others having been sent away. Jacques Collin had changed his clothes. He now wore a coat and trousers of black cloth, and his demeanor, looks, and gestures were entirely in keeping with his assumed profession. He bowed to the two statesmen and asked if he might enter the countess's room.

"She expects you," said Monsieur de Bauvan.

After a conference of half an hour, Jacques Collin opened the door and said: —

"Come in, messieurs; there is nothing more to fear."

The countess held the letter to her heart; she was calm, and apparently reconciled with herself. The count gave a sigh of relief.

"That's what they are, these men who decide our destiny and that of the peoples!" thought Jacques Collin, shrugging his shoulders as the door closed on the two friends and he found himself alone in the salon. "A female tear turns their intellect inside-out like a glove! They lose their heads at a glance! The fancies of a woman act and react on the State! Oh! what strength a man acquires when he has withdrawn himself, as I have, from those childish tyrannies, those pretended virtues overthrown by passion, those candid wickednesses, those wiles of savages! Woman, with the genius of an executioner her talent for torturing is, and ever will be the destruction of man. Attorney-general, minister of state, judge of appeals, — here they all are, blinded, fooled, twisting and turning everything to get back the letters of a duchess and a girl, and restore the reason of a woman who is madder when she has her senses than when she loses them." He smiled derisively. "And they believe in me," he continued. "They obey my promptings; I shall have

that place. I shall still reign in this world which for twenty-five years has been at my feet."

He was left alone a whole hour, forgotten, in that salon. Then Monsieur de Granville came and found him standing there, sombre and lost in revery, as a man may well be when he makes an 18th Brumaire in his life.

The attorney-general went to the threshold of the countess's room and remained there a few moments; then he returned to Jacques Collin and said:—

"Do you persist in your intentions?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"Very good; then you will take Bibi-Lupin's place; and the penalty of the condemned man Calvi is remitted."

"He will not go to Rochefort?"

"Not even to Toulon. You may employ him in your service. But these pardons and your appointment will depend on your conduct for the next six months, during which time you will act as assistant to Bibi-Lupin.

Within a week, Bibi-Lupin's assistant had enabled the authorities to restore four hundred thousand francs to the Crottat family, and Ruffard and Godet were denounced.

The money of Esther Gobseck was found in her bed, and the Comte de Sérizy paid over to Jacques Collin

the three hundred thousand francs bequeathed to him by Lucien de Rubempré.

The monument ordered by Lucien for Esther and himself is thought to be one of the finest in Père-Lachaise ; the ground below it is reserved for Jacques Collin.

After exercising his functions for about fifteen years, Jacques Collin retired in 1845.

THE END.

Messrs. Roberts Brothers' Publications.

Balzac in English.

MEMOIRS OF TWO YOUNG MARRIED WOMEN.

BY HONORÉ DE BALZAC.

Translated by KATHARINE PRESCOTT WORMELEY. 12mo.

Half Russia. Price, \$1.50.

"**T**HREE are," says Henry James in one of his essays, "two writers in Balzac,—the spontaneous one and the reflective one, the former of which is much the more delightful, while the latter is the more extraordinary." It is the reflective Balzac, the Balzac with a theory, whom we get in the "*Deux Jeunes Mariées*," now translated by Miss Wormeley under the title of "*Memoirs of Two Young Married Women*." The theory of Balzac is that the marriage of convenience, properly regarded, is far preferable to the marriage simply from love, and he undertakes to prove this proposition by contrasting the careers of two young girls who have been fellow-students at a convent. One of them, the ardent and passionate Louise de Chaulieu, has an intrigue with a Spanish refugee, finally marries him, kills him, as she herself confesses, by her perpetual jealousy and exaction, mourns his loss bitterly, then marries a golden-haired youth, lives with him in a dream of ecstasy for a year or so, and this time kills herself through jealousy wrongfully inspired. As for her friend, Renée de Maucombe, she dutifully makes a marriage to please her parents, calculates coolly beforehand how many children she will have and how they shall be trained; insists, however, that the marriage shall be merely a civil contract till she and her husband find that their hearts are indeed one; and sees all her brightest visions realized,—her Louis an ambitious man for her sake and her children truly adorable creatures. The story, which is told in the form of letters, fairly scintillates with brilliant sayings, and is filled with eloquent discourses concerning the nature of love, conjugal and otherwise. Louise and Renée are both extremely sophisticated young women, even in their teens; and those who expect to find in their letters the demure innocence of the Anglo-Saxon type will be somewhat astonished. The translation, under the circumstances, was rather a daring attempt, but it has been most felicitously done.—*The Beacon*.

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BY HONORÉ DE BALZAC.

Translated by KATHARINE PRESCOTT WORMELEY. 12mo.
Half Russia. Price, \$1.50.

ONCE more that wonderful acquaintance which Balzac had with all callings appears manifest in this work. Would you get to the bottom of the engineer's occupation in France? Balzac presents it in the whole system, with its aspects, disadvantages, and the excellence of the work accomplished. We write to-day of irrigation and of arboriculture as if they were novelties; yet in the waste lands of Montagnac, Balzac found these topics; and what he wrote is the clearest exposition of the subjects.

But, above all, in "The Village Rector" is found the most potent of religious ideas,—the one that God grants pardon to sinners. Balzac had studied and appreciated the intensely human side of Catholicism and its adaptiveness to the wants of mankind. It is religion, with Balzac, "that opens to us an inexhaustible treasure of indulgence." It is true repentance that saves.

The drama which is unrolled in "The Village Rector" is a terrible one, and perhaps repugnant to our sensitive minds. The selection of such a plot, pitiless as it is, Balzac made so as to present the darkest side of human nature, and to show how, through God's pity, a soul might be saved. The instrument of mercy is the Rector Bonnet, and in the chapter entitled "The Rector at Work" he shows how religion "extends a man's life beyond the world." It is not sufficient to weep and moan. "That is but the beginning; the end is action." The rector urges the woman whose sins are great to devote what remains of her life to work for the benefit of her brothers and sisters, and so she sets about reclaiming the waste lands which surround her chateau. With a talent of a superlative order, which gives grace to Veronique, she is like the Madonna of some old panel of Van Eyck's. Doing penance, she wears close to her tender skin a haircloth vestment. For love of her, a man has committed murder and died and kept his secret. In her youth, Veronique's face had been pitted, but her saintly life had obliterated that spotted mantle of smallpox. Tears had washed out every blemish. If through true repentance a soul was ever saved, it was Veronique's. This work, too, has afforded consolation to many miserable sinners, and showed them the way to grace.

The present translation is to be cited for its wonderful accuracy and its literary distinction. We can hardly think of a more difficult task than the Englishing of Balzac, and a general reading public should be grateful for the admirable manner in which Miss Wormeley has performed her task.—*New York Times*.

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(*L'ENVERS DE L'HISTOIRE CONTEMPORAINE.*)

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There is no book of Balzac which is informed by a loftier spirit than "L'Envers de l'Histoire Contemporaine," which has just been added by Miss Wormeley to her admirable series of translations under the title, "The Brotherhood of Consolation." The title which is given to the translation is, to our thinking, a happier one than that which the work bears in the original, since, after all, the political and historical portions of the book are only the background of the other and more absorbing theme,—the development of the brotherhood over which Madame de la Chanterie presided. It is true that there is about it all something theatrical, something which shows the French taste for making godliness itself histrionically effective, that quality of mind which would lead a Parisian to criticise the coming of the judgment angels if their entrance were not happily arranged and properly executed; but in spite of this there is an elevation such as it is rare to meet with in literature, and especially in the literature of Balzac's age and land. The story is admirably told, and the figure of the Baron Bourlac is really noble in its martyrdom of self-denial and heroic patience. The picture of the Jewish doctor is a most characteristic piece of work, and shows Balzac's intimate touch in every line. Balzac was always attracted by the mystical side of the physical nature; and it might almost be said that everything that savored of mystery, even though it ran obviously into quackery, had a strong attraction for him. He pictures Halpersohn with a few strokes, but his picture of him has a striking vitality and reality. The volume is a valuable and attractive addition to the series to which it belongs; and the series comes as near to fulfilling the ideal of what translations, should be as is often granted to earthly things.—*Boston Courier*.

The book, which is one of rare charm, is one of the most refined, while at the same time tragic, of all his works.—*Public Opinion*.

His present work is a fiction beautiful in its conception, just one of those practical ideals which Balzac nourished and believed in. There never was greater homage than he pays to the book of books, "The Imitation of Jesus Christ." Miss Wormeley has here accomplished her work just as cleverly as in her other volumes of Balzac.—*N. Y. Times*.

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Balzac paints the terrible verities of life with an inexorable hand. The siren charms, the music and lights, the feast and the dance, are presented in voluptuous colors—but read to the end of the book! There are depicted with equal truthfulness the deplorable consequences of weakness and crime. Some have read Balzac's "Cousin Bette" and have pronounced him immoral; but when the last chapter of any of his novels is read, the purpose of the whole is clear, and immorality cannot be alleged. Balzac presents life. His novels are as truthful as they are terrible. — *Springfield Union*.

Admirers of Balzac will doubtless enjoy the mingled sarcasm and keen analysis of human nature displayed in the present volume, brought out with even more than the usual amount of the skill and energy characteristic of the author. — *Pittsburgh Post*.

The art of Balzac, the wonderful power of his contrast, the depth of his knowledge of life and men and things, this tremendous story illustrates. How admirably the rise of the poet is traced; the *crescendo* is perfect in gradation, yet as inexorable as fate! As for the fall, the effect is more depressing than a personal catastrophe. This is a book to read over and over, an epic of life in prose, more tremendous than the blank verse of "Paradise Lost" or the "Divine Comedy." Miss Wormeley and the publishers deserve not congratulations alone, but thanks for adding this book and its predecessor, "Lost Illusions," to the literature of English. — *San Francisco Wave*.

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BALZAC IN ENGLISH.

Lost Illusions: The Two Poets, and Eve and David.

By HONORÉ DE BALZAC.

Being the twenty-third volume of Miss Wormeley's translation of
Balzac's novels. 12mo. Half Russia. Price, \$1.50.

For her latest translation of the Balzac fiction cycle, Miss Wormeley gives us the first and third parts of "Illusion Perdue," under the caption of "Lost Illusions," namely, "The Two Poets" and "Eve and David." This arrangement is no doubt a good one, for the readers are thus enabled to follow the consecutive fortunes of the Angouleme folk, while the adventures of Eve's poet-brother, Lucien, which occur in Paris and make a tale by themselves, are thus left for a separate publication. The novel, as we have it, then, belongs to the category of those scenes from provincial life which Balzac found so stimulating to his genius. This story, certainly, in some respects takes high rank among them. The character-drawing is fine: Lucien, the ambitious, handsome, weak-willed, selfish, and easily-sinning young bourgeois, is contrasted with David,—a touching picture of the struggling inventor, born of the people and sublimely one-purposed and pure in his life. Eve, the type of a faithful large-brained and larger-hearted wife, who supports her husband through all his hardships with unfaltering courage and kindness, is another noble creation. David inherits a poorish printing business from his skin-flint of a father, neglects it while devoting all his time and energy to his discovery of an improved method of making paper; and through the evil machinations of the rival printing firm of the Cointets, as well as the debts foisted on him by Lucien in Paris, he is brought into money difficulties and even into prison. But his invention, although sold at a sacrifice to the cunning Cointets, gets him out of the hole at last, and he and his good wife retire on a comfortable competency, which is augmented at the death of his father into a good-sized fortune. The seamy side of law in the provinces is shown up in Balzac's keen, imitable way in the description of the winding of the coils around the unsuspecting David and the depiction of such men as the brothers Cointets and the shrewd little pettifogging rascal, Petit Claud. The pictures of Angouleme aristocratic circles, too, with Lucien as high priest, are vivacious, and show the novelist's wonderful observation in all ranks of life. The bit of wild romance by which Lucien becomes the secretary of a Spanish grandee lends a fairy-tale flavor to the main episodes. Balzac, in whom is united the most lynx-eyed realism and the most extravagant romanticism, is ever and always one of the great masters in fiction of our century.

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Balzac in English.

PIERRETTE

AND

THE VICAR OF TOURS.

BY HONORÉ DE BALZAC.

Translated by Katharine Prescott Wormeley.

In *Pierrette*, which Miss Wormeley has added to her series of felicitous translations from the French master-fictionists, Balzac has made within brief compass a marvellously sympathetic study of the martyrdom of a young girl. *Pierrette*, a flower of Brittany, beautiful, pale, and fair and sweet, is taken as an undesired charge by sordid-minded cousins in Provinis, and like an exotic transplanted into a harsh and sour soil she withers and fades under the cruel conditions of her new environment. Incidentally Balzac depicts in vivid colors the struggles of two shop-keepers — a brother and sister, who have amassed a little fortune in Paris — to gain a foothold among the bourgeoisie of their native town. These two become the prey of conspirators for political advancement, and the rivalries thus engendered shake the small provincial society to its centre. But the charm of the tale is in the portrayal of the character of *Pierrette*, who understands only how to love, and who cannot live in an atmosphere of suspicion and ill-treatment. The story is of course sad, but its fidelity to life and the pathos of it are elements of unfailing interest. Balzac brings a score or more of people upon the stage, shows each one as he or she really is both in outward appearance and inward nature, and then allows motives and circumstances to work out an inevitable result. To watch this process is like being present at some wonderful chemical experiment where the ingredients are mixed with a deft and careful hand, and combine to produce effects of astonishing significance. The social genesis of the old maid in her most abhorrent form occupies much of Balzac's attention in *Pierrette*, and this theme also has a place in the story of *The Vicar of Tours*, bound up in this same volume. The vicar is a simple-minded priest who is happy enough till he takes up his quarters with an old maid landlady, who pesters and annoys him in many ways, and finally sends him forth despoiled of his worldly goods and a laughing-stock for the countryside. There is a great deal of humor in the tale, but one must confess that the humor is of a rather heavy sort, it being weighed down by a dominant satirical purpose. — *The Beacon*.

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A MEMOIR OF HONORÉ DE BALZAC.

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A complete life of Balzac can probably never be written. The sole object of the present volume is to present Balzac to American readers. This memoir is meant to be a presentation of the man, — and not of his work, except as it was a part of himself, — derived from authentic sources of information, and presented in their own words, with such simple elucidations as a close intercourse with Balzac's mind, necessitated by conscientious translation, naturally gives. The portrait in this volume was considered by Madame de Balzac the best likeness of her husband.

Miss Wormeley's discussion of the subject is of value in many ways, and it has long been needed as a help to comprehension of his life and character. Personally, he lived up to his theory. His life was in fact austere. Any detailed account of the conditions under which he worked, such as are given in this volume, will show that this must have been the case; and the fact strongly reinforces the doctrine. Miss Wormeley, in arranging her account of his career, has, almost of necessity, made free use of the letters and memoir published by Balzac's sister, Madame Survile. She has also, whenever it would serve the purpose of illustration better, quoted from the sketches of him by his contemporaries, wisely rejecting the trivialities and frivolities by the exaggeration of which many of his first chroniclers seemed bent upon giving the great author a kind of opera-bouffe aspect. To judge from some of these accounts, he was flighty, irresponsible, possibly a little mad, prone to lose touch of actualities by the dominance of his imagination, fond of wild and impracticable schemes, and altogether an eccentric and unstable person. But it is not difficult to prove that Balzac was quite a different character; that he possessed a marvellous power of intellectual organization; that he was the most methodical and indefatigable of workers; that he was a man of a most delicate sense of honor; that his life was not simply devoted to literary ambition, but was a martyrdom to obligations which were his misfortune, but not his fault.

All this Miss Wormeley has well set forth; and in doing so she has certainly relieved Balzac of much unmerited odium, and has enabled those who have not made a study of his character and work to understand how high the place is in any estimate of the helpers of modern progress and enlightenment to which his genius and the loftiness of his aims entitle him. This memoir is a very modest biography, though a very good one. The author has effaced herself as much as possible, and has relied upon "documents" whenever they were trustworthy — *N. Y. Tribune*.

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ROBERTS BROTHERS, BOSTON.

Albert Savarus, with Paz (La Fausse Maitresse) and Madame Firmiani. By HONORÉ DE BALZAC. Translated by Katharine Prescott Wormeley.

There is much in this, one of the most remarkable of his books, which is synonymous with Balzac's own life. It is the story of a man's first love for woman, his inspirer, the source from whom he derives his power of action. It also contains many details on his habits of life and work.

THE three short stories in this volume,—‘Albert Savarus,’ ‘Paz’ and ‘Madame Firmiani’—are chips from that astounding workshop which never ceased its Hephaestian labors and products until Balzac was no more. Short stories of this character flew from his glowing forge like sparks from an anvil, the playthings of an idle hour, the interludes of a more vivid drama. Three of them gathered here illustrate as usual Parisian and provincial life, two in a very noble fashion, Balzacian to the core. The third—‘Albert Savarus’—has many elements of tragedy and grandeur in it, spoiled only by an abruptness in the conclusion and an accumulation of unnecessary horrors that chill the reader. It is a block of tragic marble hewn, not to a finish, but to a fine prophetic suggestion of what is to follow if — ! The *if* never emerges from conditionality to fulfilment. The beautiful lines and sinuous curves of the nascent statue are there, not fully born of the encasing stone; what sculptors call the ‘tenons’ show in all their visibility—the supports and scaffoldings reveal their presence; the forefront is finished as in a Greek metope or Olympian tympanum, where broken Lapiths and Centaurs disport themselves; but the background is rude and primitive.

In ‘Madame Firmiani’ a few brilliant pages suffice to a perfect picture,—one of the few spotless pictures of this superb yet sinning magician so rich in pictures. It is French nature that Balzac depicts, warm with all the physical impulses, undisguised in its assaults on the soul, ingeniously sensual, odiously loose in its views of marriage and the marriage relation, but splendidly picturesque. In this brief romance noble words are wedded to noble music. In ‘Paz’ an almost equal nobility of thought—the nobility of self-renunciation—is attained. Balzac endows his men and women with happy millions and unhappy natures: the red ruby—the broken heart—blazes in a setting of gold. ‘Paz,’ the sublime Pole who loves the wife of his best friend, a Slav Crœsus, is no exception to the rule. The richest rhetoric, the sunniest colors, fail to counteract the Acherontian gloom of these lives and sorrows snatched from the cauldron of urban and rural France,—a cauldron that burns hotter than any other with its strange Roman and Celtic ardors. Balzac was perpetually dipping into it and drawing from it the wonderful and extraordinary incidents of his novels, incidents often monstrous in their untruth if looked at from any other than a French point of view. Thus, the devilish ingenuity of the jealous woman in ‘Albert Savarus’ would seem unnatural anywhere else than in the sombre French provinces of 1836,—a toadstool sprung up in the rank moonlight of the religious conventional system of education for women; but there, and then, and as one result of this system of repression, it seems perfectly natural. And so does the beautiful self-abnegation of Albert himself, that high-strung soul that could have been born only in nervous and passionate France.

As usual, Miss Wormeley's charming translation floats the reader over these pages in the swiftest and airiest manner.—*The Critic*.

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BALZAC IN ENGLISH.

An Historical Mystery.

Translated by KATHARINE PRESCOTT WORMELEY.

12mo. Half Russia. Uniform with Balzac's Works. Price, \$1.50.

An Historical Mystery is the title given to "Une Ténèbreuse Affaire," which has just appeared in the series of translations of Honoré de Balzac's novels, by Katharine Prescott Wormeley. This exciting romance is full of stirring interest, and is distinguished by that minute analysis of character in which its eminent author excelled. The characters stand boldly out from the surrounding incidents, and with a fidelity as wonderful as it is truthful. Plot and counterplot follow each other with marvellous rapidity; and around the exciting days when Napoleon was First Consul, and afterward when he was Emperor, a mystery is woven in which some royalists are concerned that is concealed with masterly ingenuity until the novelist sees fit to take his reader into his confidence. The heroine, Laurence, is a remarkably strong character; and the love-story in which she figures is refreshing in its departure from the beaten path of the ordinary writer of fiction. Michu, her devoted servant, has also a marked individuality, which leaves a lasting impression. Napoleon, Talleyrand, Fouché, and other historical personages, appear in the tale in a manner that is at once natural and impressive. As an addition to a remarkable series, the book is one that no admirer of Balzac can afford to neglect. Miss Wormeley's translation reproduces the peculiarities of the author's style with the faithfulness for which she has hitherto been celebrated. — *Saturday Evening Gazette*.

It makes very interesting reading at this distance of time, however; and Balzac has given to the legendary account much of the solidity of history by his adroit manipulation. For the main story it must be said that the action is swifter and more varied than in many of the author's books, and that there are not wanting many of those cameo-like portraits necessary to warn the reader against slovenly perusal of this carefully written story; for the complications are such, and the relations between the several plots involved so intricate, that the thread might easily be lost and much of the interest be thus destroyed. The usual Balzac compactness is of course present throughout, to give body and significance to the work, and the stage is crowded with impressive figures. It would be impossible to find a book which gives a better or more faithful illustration of one of the strangest periods in French history, in short; and its attraction as a story is at least equalled by its value as a true picture of the time it is concerned with. The translation is as spirited and close as Miss Wormeley has taught us to expect in this admirable series. — *New York Tribune*.

One of the most intensely interesting novels that Balzac ever wrote is *An Historical Mystery*, whose translation has just been added to the preceding novels that compose the "Comédie Humaine" so admirably translated by Miss Katharine Prescott Wormeley. The story opens in the autumn of 1803, in the time of the Empire, and the motive is in deep-laid political plots, which are revealed with the subtle and ingenious skill that marks the art of Balzac. . . . The story is a deep-laid political conspiracy of the secret service of the ministry of the police. Talleyrand, M'le de Cinq-Cygne, the Princess de Cadigan, Louis XVIII, as well as Napoleon, figure as characters of this thrilling historic romance. An absorbing love-story is also told, in which State intrigue plays an important part. The character-drawing is faithful to history, and the story illuminates French life in the early years of the century as if a calcium light were thrown on the scene.

It is a romance of remarkable power and one of the most deeply fascinating of all the novels of the "Comédie Humaine."

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BALZAC IN ENGLISH.

FAME AND SORROW, And Other Stories.

TRANSLATED BY KATHARINE PRESCOTT WORMELEY.

12mo. Half Russia. Uniform with our edition of Balzac's Works. Price, \$1.50. In addition to this remarkable story, the volume contains the following, namely: "Colonel Chabert," "The Atheist's Mass," "La Grande Bretèche," "The Purse," and "La Grenadière."

The force and passion of the stories of Balzac are unapproachable. He had the art of putting into half a dozen pages all the fire and stress which many writers, who are still great, cannot compass in a volume. The present volume is an admirable collection, and presents well his power of handling the short story. That the translation is excellent need hardly be said — *Boston Courier*.

The six stories, admirably translated by Miss Wormeley, afford good examples of Balzac's work in what not a few critics have thought his chief specialty. It is certain that no writer of many novels wrote so many short stories as he; and it is equally as certain that his short stories are, almost without an exception, models of what such compositions ought to be. . . . No modern author, however, of any school whatever, has succeeded in producing short stories half so good as Balzac's best. Balzac did not, indeed, attempt to display his subtlety and deftness by writing short stories about nothing. Every one of his tales contains an episode, not necessarily, but usually, a dramatic episode. The first in the present collection, better known as "*La Maison du Chat-qui-pelote*," is really a short novel. It has all the machinery, all the interest, all the detail of a regular story. The difference is that it is compressed as Balzac only could compress; that here and there important events, changes, etc., are indicated in a few powerful lines instead of being elaborated; that the vital points are thrown into strong relief. Take the pathetic story of "*Colonel Chabert*." It begins with an elaboration of detail. The description of the lawyer's office might seem to some too minute. But it is the stage upon which the Colonel is to appear, and when he enters we see the value of the preliminaries, for a picture is presented which the memory seizes and holds. As the action progresses, detail is used more parsimoniously, because the *mise-en-scene* has already been completed, and because, also, the characters once clearly described, the development of character and the working of passion can be indicated with a few pregnant strokes. Notwithstanding this increasing economy of space, the action takes on a swifter intensity, and the culmination or the tragedy leaves the reader breathless.

In "*The Atheist's Mass*" we have quite a new kind of story. This is rather a psychological study than a narrative of action. Two widely distinguished characters are thrown on the canvas here, — that of the great surgeon and that of the humble patron; and one knows not which most to admire, the vigor of the drawing, or the subtle and lucid psychical analysis. In both there is rare beauty of soul, and perhaps, after all, the poor Auvergnat surpasses the eminent surgeon, though this is a delicate and difficult question. But how complete the little story is; how much it tells; with what skill, and in how delightful a manner! Then there is that tremendous haunting legend of "*La Grande Bretèche*," a story which has always been turned into more languages and twisted into more new forms than almost any other of its kind extant. What author has equalled the continuing horror of that unfaithful wife's agony, compelled to look on and assist at the slow murder of her entrapped lover? . . . Then the death of the husband and wife, — the one by quick and fiercer dissipation, the other by simple refusal to live longer, — and the abandonment of the accursed dwelling to solitude and decay, complete a picture, which for vividness, emotional force, imaginative power, and comprehensiveness of effects, can be said to have few equals in its own class of fiction. — *Kansas City Journal*.

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